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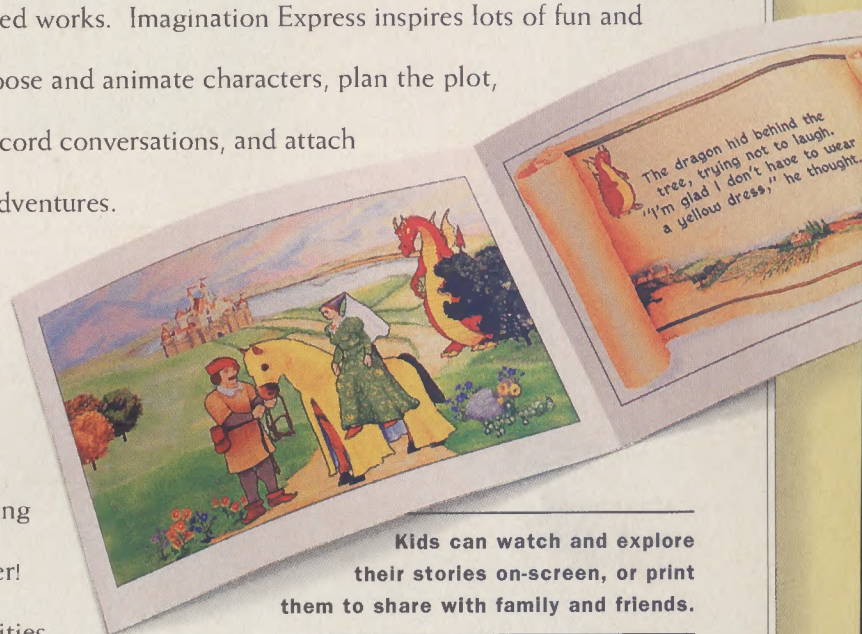
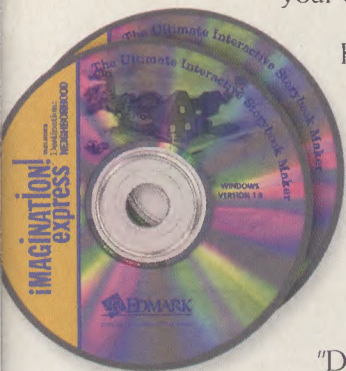
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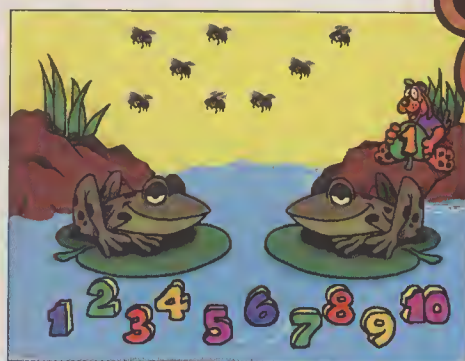
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HOMEPC

february 1995 vol.2, no.2

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entertainment, education & productivity

features

87 Great software, no money down

Try programs called "shareware" and most of the time you won't have to pay a cent unless you like what you see. We'll show you how it all works and where to find 30 of the most popular shareware games, educational programs and productivity tools. *By Stephen Brewer*

98 5 special valentines your kids can make

Follow our easy steps to create delightful messages of love and friendship with your PC. *By Carolyn Jabs*

102 Four weddings and a few nuptial planners

Have you or someone you know set the big date? We'll walk you down the software aisle to introduce you to programs that ensure everyone and everything gets to the church on time. *By Jenny C. McCune*

113 Scanners: what buyers need to know

Want to put a photo on a flyer? Copy a printed recipe into your PC cookbook? With a scanner, images and text fly off the page and onto your PC screen. Here's the scoop on how to get the model that's right for you. *By Daniel Grotta and Sally Wiener Grotta*

120 Dull documents? Just add instant art

Using pictures to spice up newsletters and school reports is a breeze with a clip-art program. We've found 10 of the best, which deliver thousands of exciting images. *By Tony Roberts*

homefront

15 From the Editor

29 Letters

35 Ask Dr. PC

No banner day for a printer; CD breaks Windows; why carry cachie?

buyer's guide

46 Hot Stuff!

Microsoft "Bob"; a CD to Di for: guess who's coming to save your screen?

58 Best Buys

5 Ft. 10 Pak returns; discounts or dishonor?; a \$25 custom retailer

131 Consumer Lab

Our jury of consumers assesses four tax-prep packages to see which ones produce the best return.



71 Fun and Games

Under a Killing Moon shines; Python CD-ROM is a scream. Also: Star Trek Interactive Technical Manual, Blown Away, JigSoft and more.

161 Kid Raves

The Magic School Bus rolls into inner and outer space; Digby the dog chases his tale. Plus: four new four-star programs, including three terrific creativity packages and a game that takes the mystery out of fractions.

169 Home Library

The Way Things Work: a top-notch CD-ROM gets to the bottom of 200 common tools and inventions. Also: The Story of Civilization, Skier's Encyclopedia and Smithsonian's America.



education

149 Preschool - Grade 3

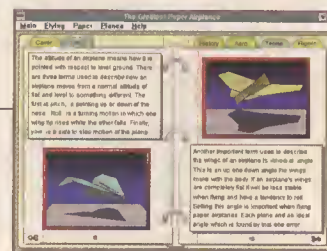
See why the PC is letter-perfect for helping young spellers.

153 Grades 4 - 8

Learn how software that teaches kids to build things spurs constructive thinking skills.

157 Grades 9 - 12

In today's astronomy programs, multimedia is the star.



do-it-yourself

173 Nuts + Bolts

Use our step-by-step guide to neaten up files on a Windows hard drive.

183 Hobbies + Lifestyles

Collect the facts on seven programs that organize and place value on your collections of coins, stamps, trading cards and more.



personal productivity

187 Financial Adviser

Looking for a hot stock tip? Explore a disk-based or on-line service and you'll be getting warmer in no time.

191 Working at Home

Here's the lowdown on the new "super printers," which can fax and copy. Some can even scan.



resources

201 On-line Connections

Looking for love in cyberspace? We'll show you where to find it.

209 Bookstore

How to fix a PC without going broke; Microsoft Office primer; a great Macintosh guide gets better.

242 Finishing Touch

Steve Bennett: Why PC stands for Parental Commitment.





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—Computer Game Review, August 1994



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*This specially recorded CD recreates the experience of 3D sound from any CD player. The demo CD is available for a \$5.95 shipping and handling charge which can be fully credited toward the purchase of a Vivid 3D system. This offer applies only to Vivid 3D products purchased directly from NuReality. International orders do not include freight charges, duty or VAT.

from the editor

Much as I appreciate Valentine's Day, it's my wedding anniversary at the end of January that makes me think more about love and romance. This year, I'm particularly nostalgic as my husband and I celebrate one of those "milestone" anniversaries that makes you feel as if you should rent Madison Square Garden and invite several hundred friends and family members to celebrate in style. But we're both very private people, so we'll leave the Garden floor to the New York Knicks. It's far more likely we'll mark the day together quietly, toasting each other with great champagne and recalling the intimacies of our youthful courtship.



One of my fondest memories of that time, of course, is our wedding day. It wasn't a particularly big affair; we had managed to trim our list to about 100 guests (no small task since between us we had more than 25 aunts and uncles and scores of cousins). But it was a fairly traditional ceremony, complete with formal dress and an elegant reception and dinner at a Park Avenue hotel. There were endless details: the hotel, invitations, food, band, flowers, wedding gown and tux, dresses for the bridal party, seating arrangements for the guests, rings, blood tests, license, hairdresser and honeymoon reservations—and that barely scratches the surface.

Not long ago, I was rummaging through some old papers and came across our guest list, with its check marks and X's indicating who was attending and who had declined. We used that list for our invitations, thank-you notes and, later, for birth announcements.

But today, that handwritten list seems as much a relic of a bygone era as the hula hoop. Now, couples have computers to help them plan their special day with a fraction of the fuss. And

Using PCs for valentines, wedding marches (& April 15) they get to save their

guest list in a form that can be updated easily and used for family events for years to come.

In this issue's story on wedding planner software (page 102), you'll see how four couples simplified their wedding preparations with the help of easy-to-use, inexpensive programs that stretch slim budgets and ease tight schedules. These packages make great engagement or shower gifts for couples who are heading toward the altar.

In fact, love is all around this issue. We'll introduce you to art programs that help you and your children create valentines for someone special (page 98) and show you where people are finding romance in cyberspace (page 201)—you'll find out why contributing editor Charles Bowen believes that on-line personals are putting a whole new spin on the dating game.

Money, of course, can't buy you love. It's a good thing, too, considering how many of us have teetering checking-account balances after our holiday spending binges. So this is the perfect time of year for our cover story on the best bargain software (page 87), which explores "shareware," some of the best programs you'll find at relatively low prices. These programs, which run the gamut from games and learning software to Windows tools, productivity packages and Internet guides, let you try before you buy—and even better, when you do buy, you'll

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For investors, we check out how to pick hot stocks using your computer, modem and some savvy software and services (page 187). And while we're on the subject of making money, we can't forget that Uncle Sam will want his share. This month's Consumer Lab (page 131) puts the four top-selling tax preparation software packages to the test, telling you which ones help you prepare the most accurate return. And don't assume these packages aren't valuable if you normally hire an accountant to handle your taxes; one tax attorney estimates that using tax software before you visit your CPA can save you 30 percent to 80 percent off his or her fee.

If you get a tax refund, you might want to use it to shop for a scanner, so check out our buyer's guide to these handy devices (page 113). Until recently, scanners were expensive and cumbersome, but no longer. Now, more consumers are using scanners to create great-looking letters, brochures, reports and documents.

In the same vein, look into our roundup of suazzy clip-art packages (page 120). We selected 10 of the best, which offer images that are fun—cartoon bunnies and bears—and beautiful—a set of environmental-themed engravings.

And don't miss our software reviews: Seven of the 19 programs in this month's issue earned the coveted four-star rating from our hard-to-please judges.

Finally, congratulations to the winners of a Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia in our November survey drawing: Michael Lamore, Karen Raymond, Angie Fair, Shelly Wilfong, Chester Berger, Ed Eckard, Stan Fischler, Joyce Mchutosh, William Karchner and Lynn Huntley. For a chance to win a multimedia upgrade kit from Diamond Multimedia Systems, see page 196.

Happy Valentine's Day! •

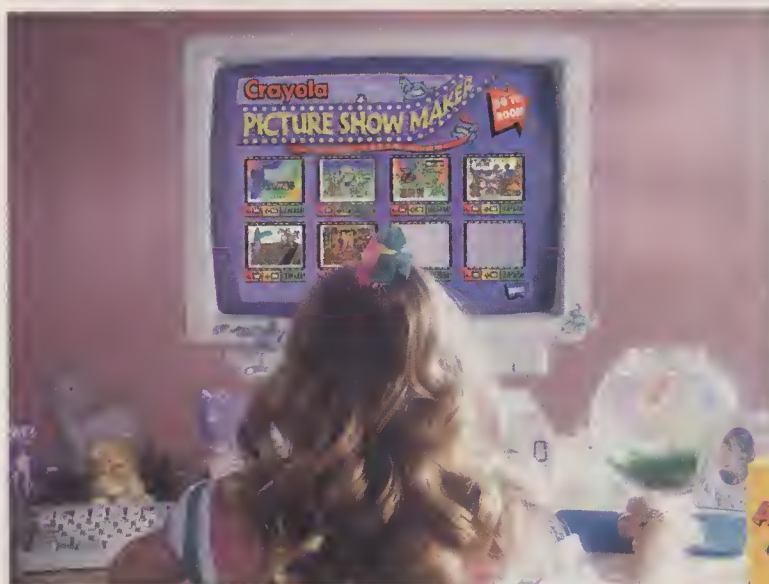
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Which all begs the following question: why not ask the helpful salesperson to kindly substitute the MultiSync XV15 for the monitor that comes with the system? Or if you've already bought a system,

why not upgrade?

These questions, we suppose, you could ponder for days upon end. However, if you're a bit impatient, we

suggest you visit your computer retailer and compare. Ask to see the MultiSync XV15 next to any other monitor. You will see the MultiSync XV15 stands alone.

For more information on the MultiSync XV15, simply call 1-800-NEC-INFO. Or for information sent via fax, call 1-800-366-0476 and request document number 981501.

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Features	1995 Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia™	Microsoft® Encarta™ '95	The 1995 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia™
Total Multimedia Hours	Over 16 hours	Over 10 hours	Over 6 hours
On-line Celebrity Tour Guide	Yes, Patrick Stewart	No	No
Total Time of Video Clips with Sound	Over 30 minutes	Less than 10 minutes	Over 30 minutes
Timeline Illustrated with Videos & Photos	Yes	No, videos Yes, photos	No, videos Yes, photos
Number of Articles	35,000+	26,000+	15,000+



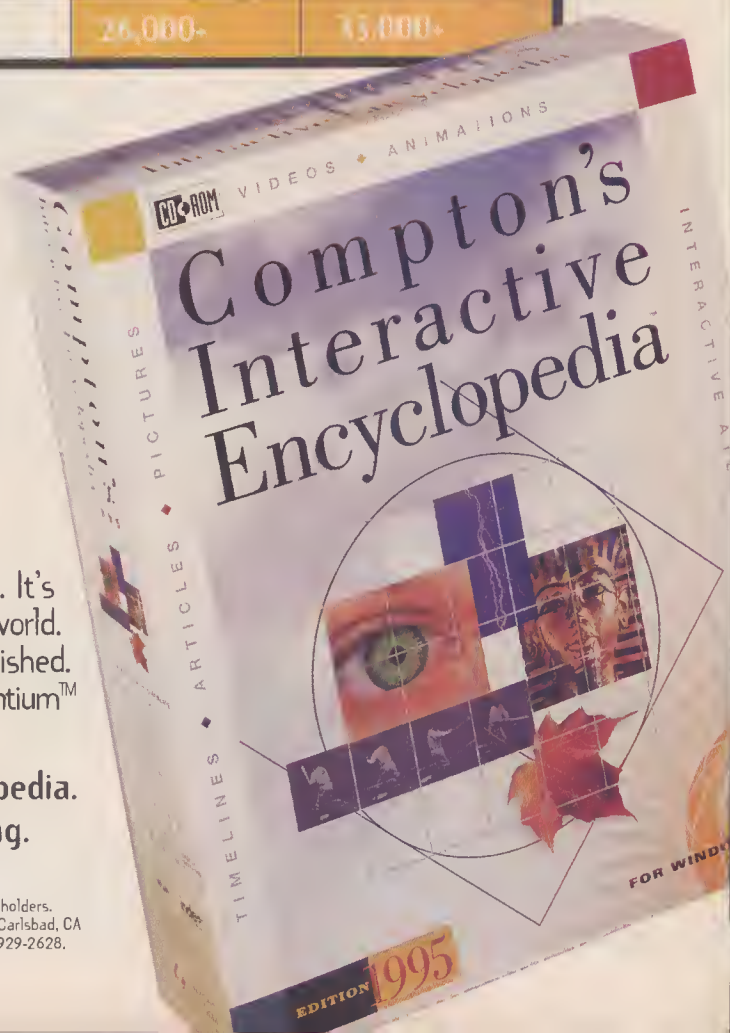
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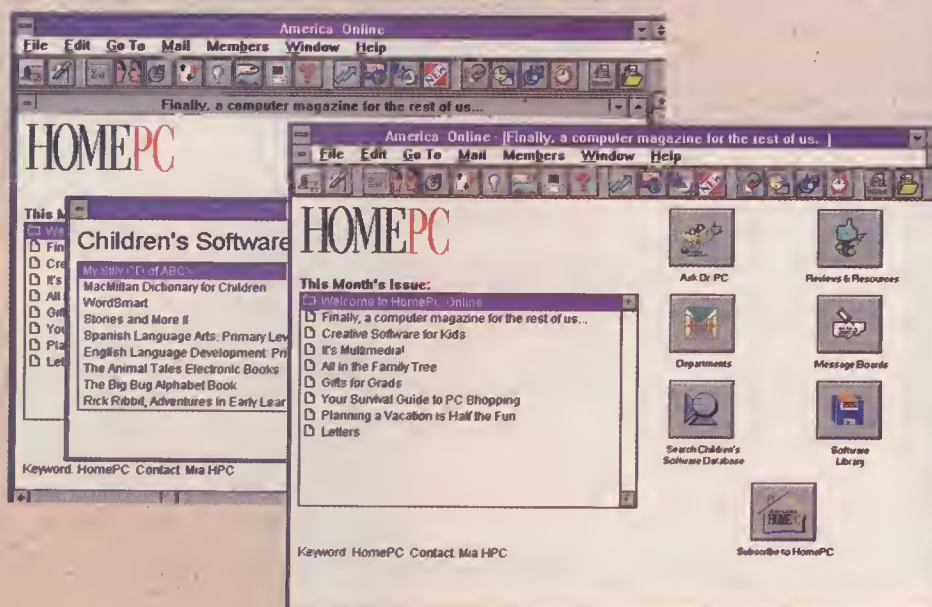
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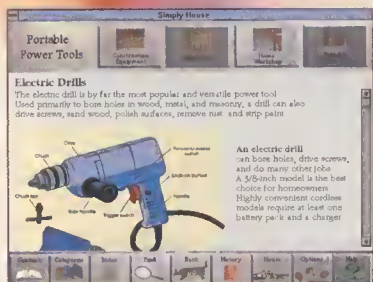
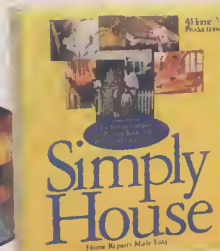
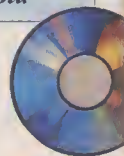
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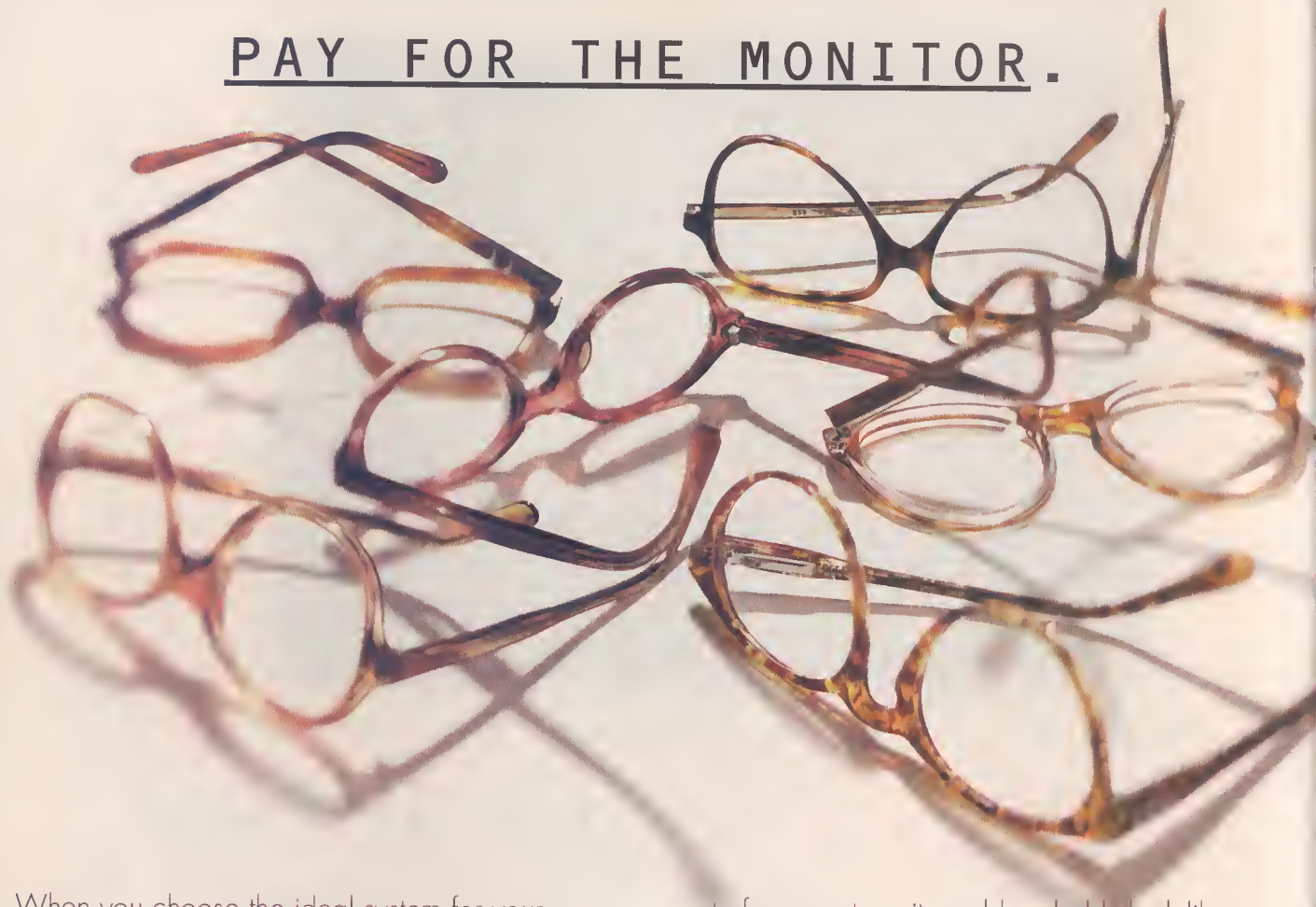
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When you choose the ideal system for your home, don't overlook the most obvious component: The monitor. Computer companies will frequently include a low-quality monitor, which makes a complete system easier to buy. But a lot harder to live with.



Nokia is Finland's largest multinational company, and the leading brand of monitors in Europe.

rest of your system, it would probably look like the Nokia 17" 447L multimedia monitor.

With a .28 mm dot pitch flat square tube and maximum resolution of 1024 x 768 at a refresh rate of 75 Hz, the 447L is the caliber of display usually enjoyed by graphics profes-

If you chose your monitor as carefully as the

sionals. In fact, Nokias have been named o

*When used together with an appropriate graphics card. 17" CRT yields a diagonal picture size of 15.75". Manufactured and designed in Finland in an ISO 9001 approved environment.
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PC Magazine Editors' Choice and an Experts' Pick in *Windows Sources*. So the 447L is particularly suitable for the graphics-rich programs families tend to run. The 447L also features front panel solid-state screen adjustments and stereo powered speakers under the bezel—ideal for multimedia software. Which brings us to the most important consideration.

Children now spend long hours with their young eyes just inches away from monitor screens. Here the 447L shows its real value. Its emissions control has earned Sweden's MPRII certification—one of the strictest standards in the world. Its ergonomics reduce eyestrain and fatigue, and demonstrate real user-sensitivity.*

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447L—17"	80Hz	80Hz	75Hz

the 447L is made) show throughout

the system: From no CFCs or formaldehyde in the materials (which eliminates harmful gases) right down to using recycled paper in the packaging.



Nokia makes speakers for German luxury cars, so adding them to the 447L was easy.

Not only is the 447L friendlier to users, it won't clash with the furniture

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letters



You made my kids' days!

I thought you might like to know that some people actually make the projects you spend so much time creating ("Family Projects for the Holidays," December 1994, page 102). I created a countdown calendar and sent a copy to my 27-year-old son and 26-year-old daughter. I have a black-and-white printer, so I used green-and-red paper and I think it looked pretty good!

Paul H. McRoy
Carbondale, Ill.

You forgot a memory trick

"Memory Not Included" (December 1994, page 180) is a very important article for those of us who need different memory configurations for different purposes. But the author missed one method of changing the configuration—a "startup menu" that comes with MS-DOS 6.0. It is much easier to create the menu in one *autoexec.bat* and *config.sys* file than to use different floppies or rename files on the hard drive every time you need to change the configuration. This menu is an obscure part of the DOS operating system but a useful one. The directions are found in the DOS 6.0 manual.

Casey Fabiano
Rochester, N.Y.

Grade threw me for a curve

I purchased a Gateway 2000 486-66 multimedia computer one year ago, and I feel that the "B" rating Gateway received in your Consumer Lab on PCs (December

1994, page 215) was lower than this quality company deserved.

This was my first "real" computer purchase and I tried to do it right. I found the system easy to set up and it ran well right out of the box, although the monitor developed an intermittent problem that was difficult to isolate. This could have been a negative experience. Instead, I found the true value of dealing with a world-class company. Gateway delivered when they said they would. They followed up and, most important, they solved my problem. I have a great system backed by the manufacturer, and I would buy another system from the same company.

Dennis Holliday
Arvada, Colo.

Stop the violence

I especially liked the "Finishing Touch" column by David Coursey on the back page of your November issue. It is nice to know that I am not the only parent who is upset by some of the games children play. I did not know anything about the "V-Chip" Coursey mentions. I also believe there should be an age guideline set for purchasing the software. If children can't buy a pack of cigarettes until they are 18, so it should be for, as Coursey put it, games based on behavior that would get a person arrested in real life.

Cindy M. Marino
Erie, Pa.

Jumping the gun on CDs

I like the style and most of the content of your magazine. I'm not a techno-freak, and I like being able to understand what I read. There. Now, it's time to gripe...

From the other computer magazines that land on my desk, I gather that perhaps less than 25 percent of the PCs now in home use are equipped with multimedia. Why, then, does it seem 75 percent of your editorial and review content refers to CD-ROM/multimedia

products? Not all of us can afford to change our hardware every year or so, and the vast majority of software is still on floppy disks. Multimedia is still in its infancy, relatively speaking; let's let it mature a bit before we treat it as the *sine qua non* of the computing world.

Jim Harkins
Casco, Mich.

A couple of holiday cheers

Just a note to tell you how much I enjoyed the December issue of *HomePC*, and particularly the Best Buys section.

I ran across the magazine last night on the grocery rack for the first time. It is put together very well and easy to read. I just purchased a Packard Bell multimedia PC with double-speed CD-ROM drive, send/receive fax and a 500-MB hard drive. What a system! Al-



ready, though, it seems out of date with all the new products coming on. Faster and more powerful is in.

Jim McDonald
Duncanville, Texas

The December '94 issue of *HomePC* is wonderful. The hardware articles—in particular, "The Shopper's Guide to Monitors" (page 173), "Memory Not Included" (page 180) and "Nuts + Bolts"

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(page 277)—are the best. They provided exactly the information that I needed to know.

Overall, your magazine is easy to understand, and that is what I like best about it. Every other computer magazine out there leaves me half asleep with its “you-must-be-a-genius-to-understand-me” style. Not good for the average hyperactive 24-year-old guy like me—the guy who loves his PC and spends more time with it than he does with his girlfriend. I do not like to be weighed down by thunderous 40-letter words and concepts beyond the grasp of a mere mortal!

Keep doing exactly what you did in December. More hardware stuff—I love it!

H. Heller
Ottawa, Ontario

Senior service?

I have just finished reading my first issue of *HomePC*. I found it to be colorful and interesting, but I can't help agreeing with [November letter writer] Doris Watson that few articles apply to readers over 50.

In a retirement community like ours, there are many computers and everyone seems eager to learn more. Senior citizens can never learn too much!

Marie Townsend
Sun City, Ariz.

We are retired, but we are delighted to have found a magazine that is exceptionally well designed to meet the needs of the family. It is refreshing to find a publication designed with children and families in mind.

Joy and Gayle Beanland
Duarte, Calif.

Kudos!

Your magazine is by far the best of its type. I have been a large-scale mainframe computer operator for 15 years now and I have seen just about every magazine on computing imaginable. *HomePC* was just the type of magazine I wanted when I took the plunge and purchased my multimedia PC this

year. My wife and 10-year-old daughter also have benefited from your reviews and suggestions. Don't change anything about your format! I really look forward to receiving your fine magazine each month and will continue to recommend it to my friends and co-workers. Keep up the good work!

Carl Meyer
Monroe, N.Y.

I have just read my first issue of your magazine and I am thrilled that at long last there is a publication for non-technical PC users. For ages now I have been looking for a magazine that offers advice on educational programs for children. So many magazines have only a tiny section devoted to this, aiming most of their reviews at people who want violent games. Your “Financial Adviser” section is also of great interest.

Sallie McDonald
Noorder-Paarl, South Africa

Oops...

Bible Crosswords and Family Bible Software from Logos Research Systems, both mentioned in the December 1994 issue's Grade 9-12 column, are available only in the Windows format, at \$29.95 and \$79.95, respectively.

In “The Art of Persuasion” (January, page 122), we referred to a Micrografx program, Crayola's Art Studio, as Amazing Art Studio. Micrografx also makes Crayola's Amazing Art Adventure.

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Manhasset, NY 11030

You can also fax your comments to us at (516) 562-7007 or send electronic mail to HomePC on America Online or homepc@aol.com using any other on-line service.

Please include your name, address and phone number. All correspondence becomes the property of HomePC and may be edited for length and content.



The multimedia Performa has a color monitor, a CD-ROM drive, built-in speakers and a fax/modem. You'll find you also have all the software necessary to run a household, teach your kids or work at home.

Back in the old days, before computers roamed the earth, people used to learn things by reading words on a page.

But then, that was before ideas came to life, squawking and swooping and flapping their way off computer screens and into your imagination.

Welcome to multimedia for Macintosh®.

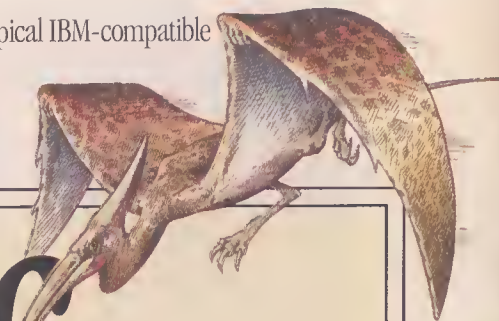
What is multimedia, anyway?

Multimedia computing brings together different types of media: text, illustration, photos, sounds, animation, speech

and video. And with an Apple® Macintosh Performa®, it's easy. Just pop a multimedia CD-ROM into the computer.

Take any number of dinosaur CDs. You can read all about pterodactyls, then hit a

January 13, 1994, "Getting multimedia hardware and, especially, software to run on a typical IBM-compatible



If

a computer

stimulates your eyes and ears,
can your mind be far behind?

video button and zoom in for a closer look. Watch a paleontologist talk about the flying lizard. Or go listen to the *T. rex* roar again.

Instead of dry text, you get an eyeful. And an earful. And eventually, a mind full.

New ideas are continually reinforced, and interactive controls let you go at your own pace. So kids learn faster and retain more. (Maybe that's why more schools use Apple computers than any other kind.)

Why is Macintosh better?

As Walter Mossberg noted in *The Wall Street Journal* on

computer can be a frustrating—even impossible—task.... In general, users of Apple's Macintosh computers face very few of these problems, because a single company—Apple...has made sound, graphics and video a priority.”*

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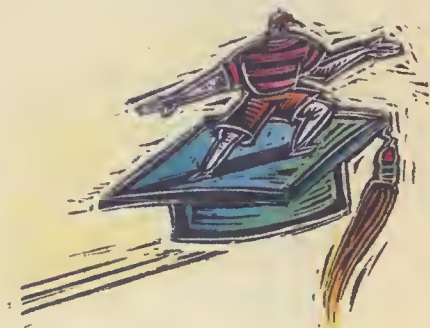
The Family Macintosh

To locate your nearest Apple retailer, give us a call at 800-538-9696, ext. 215. © 1994 Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo, Mac, Macintosh, Performa and "The power to be your best" are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. "Excerpt from the January 13th, 1994, "Personal Technology" column by Walter S. Mossberg titled "Behind the Hype Lurks the Darker Side of Multimedia," reprinted by permission of The Wall Street Journal and Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

Five ways So multimedia kit your kids'

1. Your kids will get scholarships.

Multimedia kits from Creative Labs include all you need to turn a PC into an outrageous educational system—speakers, a CD-ROM, a Sound Blaster™ sound card, and lots of the hottest software. Your rug rats could become rocket scientists overnight. In Sound Blaster Digital Schoolhouse™ you get the most popular educational software. Like *Kid Works 2*, *Stradiwackius*, and *The Cruncher*. Suddenly, math and reading are cooler than Beavis and Butthead.

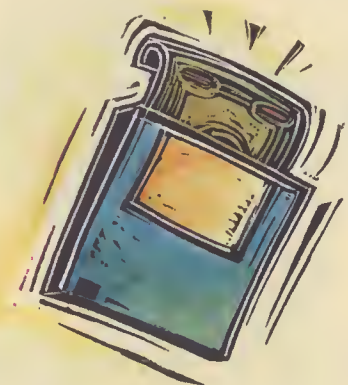


2. You'll become smarter and maybe get a better job.

Getting a Sound Blaster upgrade kit for the kids means you learn along with them. Tackle *Eagle Eye Mysteries* or *Wing Commander*. Browse through the talking *New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* to sharpen your mind. When the boss overhears you drop a key fact—boom!—that corner office is yours.

3. Use financial software to make shrewd investments.

More than just fun and games, Sound Blaster Edutainment CD™ 16 kit includes smart software too. Like *Quicken Deluxe*, the financial software you use to manage spending and analyze holdings. With *Creative VoiceAssist™* and *Creative Talking Scheduler™* your computer will obey voice commands or remind you of chores. Like counting the money you've saved.



Of course, all Sound Blaster multimedia kits provide 100% Sound Blaster compatibility, technical

Sound Blaster s help pay for education.



4. You stay home more often, so you save money.

When multimedia joins the family, nobody leaves the house. Hours are spent with *SeaWolf*, *Links*, and *3D Dinosaur Adventure*.

Instead of going to the movies, you're making movies. Mom's got the mike. Billy has the joystick. Dad's playing *Woolly Bully* on the keyboard. You're silly. You're happy. You haven't spent a dime in months.

5. Invest all the money you saved in a T-bill.

With all Creative Labs upgrade kits, you get the best hardware and the coolest software for hundreds less than if purchased separately. Sound Blaster Digital Schoolhouse gives you the best educational titles. Sound Blaster Edutainment CD™ 16 includes educational software plus hot games like *Rebel Assault*—42 titles in all. Both come with stereo speakers, a double-speed CD-ROM drive, and the Sound Blaster 16-bit sound card. There's even a Sound Blaster Edutainment EZ™ 16 available as a single-slot external drive solution.



Sound Blaster Digital Schoolhouse™
Sound Blaster 16 stereo sound card
Double-speed internal CD-ROM drive
Stereo speakers

Includes these educational titles:

Kid Works 2
Spell It 3
The Cruncher
Stradiwackius
Peter Pan: A Story Painting Adventure
Eagle Eye Mysteries
Gus Goes To CyberTown
The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia
Speed
3D Dinosaur Adventure
Plus nine other software titles!



Sound Blaster Edutainment CD™ 16
Sound Blaster 16 stereo sound Card
Double-speed internal CD-ROM drive
Stereo speakers

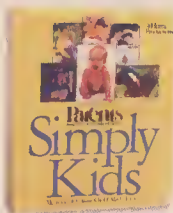
Includes these popular titles:

Rebel Assault
Links
SSN-21 SeaWolf
Wing Commander
Pagan: Ultima VIII
The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia
3D Dinosaur Adventure
Aldus PhotoStyler SE
Quicken Deluxe CD-ROM
Creative VoiceAssist
Plus 32 other software titles!

help, and easy installation. So visit your nearest Creative Labs dealer. Or call 1-800-998-5227 Ext. 106.

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MULTIMEDIA IS CREATIVE™

Sound Blaster Edutainment EZ, Creative VoiceAssist, Creative Talking Scheduler, Multimedia is Creative, and the Sound Blaster Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Creative Technology Ltd.
International inquiries: Creative Technology Ltd., Singapore. TEL: 65-773-0233 FAX: 65-773-0353.



Raising children is the most rewarding job you'll ever have. But it's also the toughest. That's why there's *Parents* magazine's Simply Kids, a new soft-

ware program that can help make being

Medical History a parent a little easier.

Dental History

Childcare Information

Social Information

Medical Database

Child Rearing Database

Electronic Scrapbook

With *Parents* magazine's Simply Kids, it's easy to organize, store and update important information about your children. Medical and dental records, special memories, school records, and even favorite photographs* can

all be accessed with a click of a button.

You'll also have quick, easy access to advice from the experts at *Parents* magazine. But best of all, *Parents* magazine's Simply Kids grows as your

child grows. From first tooth to first date, the information you want will always be right at your fingertips.



Stop By Any Software Dealer Or
Call 1-800-773-5445, Dept. K1071,
For The One Nearest You.

So you can spend less time worrying about
your children and more time enjoying
them. And you certainly don't
need instructions to do that.

Because They Don't Come With Instructions.

Parents
Edited by America's
#1 Family Magazine.



A portion of the proceeds from the sales of
Parents magazine's
Simply Kids software
goes to Make-A-Wish.

**4Home
Productions™**
A Division Of Computer Associates International, Inc.

Windows 3.1 (or higher) required. Available only on 3.5" diskettes. *Storing photos and graphics requires use of a scanner or a film processing service. The Health Knowledge and Development databases contain general information. They are not a substitute for proper medical care for your child by a physician. © 4Home Productions is a division of Computer Associates International, Inc., Islandia, NY 11788-7000. All other product names referenced herein are trademarks of their respective companies.

ask dr. pc

HOME REMEDIES YOU CAN USE

EDITED BY SEAN FULTON



Q I use the
Microsoft

**Publisher 2.0 desktop
publishing program
for Windows. The first**

'Publisher' rejects my letters

**time I tried the
"banner" template, it
worked fine. But now
when I print with it,
letters are cut off at
the edges and the
borders. Please help!**

A There are several possible solutions here. First, make sure you're using the latest release of Publisher, which is Version 2.0a. Click on the Help pull-down menu at the top of your Microsoft Publisher window and select "About Publisher." If it says you're running 2.0 rather than 2.0a, call Microsoft at (800) 426-9400 for a free upgrade.

Next, check to see that you have the latest printer driver—the program that tells your PC how to

print. To find out, contact your printer manufacturer, or call Microsoft and ask for the free Windows Driver Library, which has all the latest Windows drivers.

Sometimes, the way programs such as Publisher interact with Windows confuses your printer and causes it to fumble your request. If you're using a laser printer, you can try to smooth the communications path by going into the Windows Control Panel, clicking twice on the Printers icon and selecting your installed printer. Click the Setup button, then the Options button. If your printer supports graphics (most laser printers do), look for the graphics section on your screen. Change the Graphics Mode to "Raster" (your printer's manual will show you how); this will highlight the Print True Type As Graphics box. Click on the box to activate it.

If this doesn't solve the problem, or if you're using an ink jet or dot matrix printer, try setting your Windows video driver to VGA, even if you have Super VGA capabilities. Otherwise, when Windows checks the video driver to see what the image it's about to print is supposed to look like, it may not understand the answer. VGA is a video standard, so Windows can almost always rely on it to provide a clear picture of the image you want to print.

If VGA isn't selected as the display type, try changing it. (But first write down the name of the driver that's listed as your display type, so you can put it back the way it was if changing the video driver doesn't work.) To change your video driver, click on the Windows Setup icon in the Main program group and go to the top of the Windows Setup window. From the pull-down menu titled "Options," select "Change System Settings." You'll find a button

with a down arrow to the right of the display listing. Click on this button once, and a list of video drivers will appear on your screen. Click once on VGA to select it. Windows will then ask if you want to



use the current VGA driver or install a new one. Click the "Current" button, then restart Windows.

Q I have a num-
ber of files

**on my computer with
the extension ".dll."**

Extension headache

Can I open them?

What do they do?

A The file extension *dll* means Dynamic Linked Library. Windows needs its *dll* files, so don't delete them. In fact, you probably should steer clear of them. Other files you should never tinker with have an *exe* or *com* extension; these are the programs themselves.



There are hundreds of extensions for PC files, and it's often difficult to figure out what they mean. If you want to take a peek at a "mysterious" file, you'll want to be careful to do so without changing it by mistake. To look at a file called *filename*, for example, exit Windows, or go into a DOS Window, and type: *type filename | more*. That bar in the middle of the command is called a "pipe" (you'll probably find it at the upper right of your keyboard, between the backspace and Enter keys). In DOS, you can often "pipe," or sift, the result of one command through another command. In this case, you're using the *type* command to display a file called *filename*, then "piping" its output (the file) through the DOS program called *more*, which displays data one screenful at a time.

This will allow you to view the contents of a file without opening it for editing. You might not be able to understand what you see, but at least you can satisfy your curiosity.

Q Hey, Doc, I just read in

All this Pentium talk bugs me

the newspaper that there's a "bug" in Intel's Pentium chip that causes it to make mistakes. Should I hold off on buying a

Pentium-based computer for a while?

A Absolutely not. It's a fact of life: computer hardware and software often contain "bugs" of some sort; microprocessor chips are no exception. These flaws range from minor mistakes to catastrophes that render the products useless. Like most computer companies, Intel keeps track of such bugs as they are discovered and frequently modifies its products when problems arise.

In this case, Pentium chips have a problem handling something



called "floating point" calculations. Intel estimates that the odds of a user experiencing a problem with the processor are one in 9 billion. So far, the only people who have noticed the problem—or who are likely ever to do so—are scientists who run enormous calculations on their computers.

Most programs for home and office use don't do such abstract math, so you most likely have nothing to worry about.

Nevertheless, if you want to speak with the folks at Intel about replacing the processor in a Pentium computer, call the company at (800) 628-8686. Intel won't automatically replace your processor, but an engineer can determine whether it's causing a problem; if it

is, Intel will replace the chip free of charge. Chips manufactured after the discovery of this bug shouldn't have the problem.

Q I've written my life story (85 years' worth) in Microsoft Works for Windows—440 pages saved in 19 files. Now I'm trying to consolidate it, but I keep getting this message:

Memories, not RAM

"This application has violated systems integrity due to an invalid page fault and will be terminated. Quit all applications, quit Windows and then restart your computer." Help!

A Microsoft Works requires 4 megabytes (MB) of memory in order to run. The message you're seeing suggests that after loading the program, you're running out of memory as you try to consolidate your data into one big file.

Here's what you need to do: First, copy all your existing files onto floppy disks and put them away for safekeeping. After you've made a backup copy of your work, make another. Make two or three, and give one to a friend, just to be certain your data is protected.

Now it's time to get to work. The

structions that Quattro Pro sent out. Pick up a \$49 upgrade at a local computer store or call Word-Perfect at (801) 225-5000 to get the latest version of Quattro Pro.

It's frustrating to have to upgrade in order to get your software to work with your printer, but most software disclaimers note there is no guarantee the program will work at all, much less with your hardware. Just be thankful conflicts don't happen more often.

Q I'd like to
buy a multi-

media PC, and I

What is cache's real cachet?

keep hearing about

cache memory.

What is it and what

does it do?

A Cache memory is similar to regular memory (random access memory, or RAM), but it can transfer information much more quickly.

Like RAM, the cache gives your computer a place to store information that the processor may need while it's running your programs. When your processor needs that information, your computer first searches through the cache. If it doesn't find the information it needs there, it checks the RAM and copies the information into the cache to use later.

Having cache memory is like relying on a small woodpile by the fireplace rather than a bigger one out in the yard. If you had to trudge outside each time you needed a log to heat the living room, you'd be walking a lot, the fire would die down while you were gone and you'd have to stoke it every time you returned. Similarly, when your processor has to "wait" for information to be dragged into or out of RAM, its performance



slows. The more cache your computer has, the more information it can hold for quick retrieval by the processor. If you're buying a new computer, look for one with 256 kilobytes of cache—any more isn't worth the cost for the performance boost you'd see. •

Dr. PC was assisted this month by Andy Feibus, Michele K. Hugelmeyer and Chris Oggerino.

Do you have a question for Dr. PC? You can mail it to Ask Dr. PC, HomePC, 600 Community Drive, Manhasset, NY 11030, phone it in to (500) DOC-IS-IN, fax it to (516) 562-7007 or post it to the doctor at HomePC on America Online.

Dead boring best described old George's graphics. Then he bought **Simply 3D**. His graphics sizzled. Logos flew. 3D effects? Drop dead gorgeous. George now wears black. Drives a Porsche. Is incredibly attractive to the opposite sex. Not bad for **59 bucks**!

It'll change your life. (If it doesn't in 30 days, send it back and trade in the Porsche).

To get our great new Catalog or to order **Simply 3D** call **800.881.4108**



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When all else fails,

Starting at
\$119



August 1993
APC Back-UPS 1250

"The clear winner in price performance...it's unbeatable..."

There are three types of computer users: those who have lost data due to a power problem, those who are going to, and those who have protected themselves against the inevitable surge, blackout or brownout with the most reliable UPS they can buy: Back-UPS by APC. In fact, editors and users alike agree that if your system demands absolute reliability, you can depend on APC Back-UPS.

According to a study by Bell Labs, undervoltages represent the overwhelming majority of power problems likely to hit your computer. The question is not if a failure will occur, but when. Whether due to construction, wiring, weather, other office

APC Voted most reliable by 3-to-1

Tripp

Best



In a recent poll by PC Magazine's MagNet, APC was voted the most reliable UPS manufacturer by a 3-to-1 margin. That's dependability that will see you through years of unmatched power protection.

equipment, or accidents, power problems are as inevitable as death and taxes. That's why you need instantaneous battery backup power from the Back-UPS to prevent data loss, hard disk crashes, and hardware damage.

If you're concerned about lightning, rest assured that when measured using the ANSI/IEEE 587 Category A test wave, Back-UPS are superior to virtually all separate surge suppressors. Surge performance is even backed by a \$25,000 Lifetime Equipment Protection Guarantee.



**LIFETIME
EQUIPMENT
PROTECTION
\$25,000**

FOR AS LONG AS YOU OWN THIS PRODUCT, IF YOUR PROPERTY CONNECTED EQUIPMENT IS EVER DAMAGED BY AN AC SURGE INCLUDING SURGES DUE TO LIGHTNING, APC WILL REPAIR OR REPLACE OUR PRODUCT AND UP TO \$25,000 OF CONNECTED EQUIPMENT (SEE POLICY FOR DETAILS, PRINTED IN U.S. AND CANADA ONLY).



Back-UPS® prevail



"All other brands of UPS die regularly in this lightning prone environment. My APC won't die!" said Paul Sisilli, Systems Analyst, City of Port St. Lucie. "With other brands, users don't find out until it is too late. The power interruptions here are very hard to live with. The other brands are dying off. Typically they last just beyond their warranty period. My Back-UPS is going on three years...no other brand is as reliable."



Don Truax knows first hand about Back-UPS reliability: "It ought to be against the law to buy a computer without an APC Back-UPS 250. I recently had a direct lightning hit right outside the house...my computer never blinked. Each morning I get a surge down the line and both APC's hate it - they simultaneously 'holler 'n clamp' while my 'Brand T' quietly sleeps in. I've relegated that unit to non-critical household stuff like my VCR."



Andrew Wargo, Manager at Baxter Land Company, tried two other brands before Back-UPS. "One lasted a few days, a second one went up in smoke after 48 hours, a third lasted less than 24 hours! I then bought my Back-UPS for less than half of what I had paid for the others. We've purchased three more Back-UPS and for the past 14 months they've been just hummin' away on the same power line that was eating the other brands alive!"

If you're protecting a network server, a communications interface port (on models Back-UPS 400 and higher) provides the security of an automatic shutdown to all major OS including NetWare, Windows, Windows NT, LANServer, LAN Manager, LANtastic, SCO Unix, OS/2, Banyan Vines, AppleShare/System7 and more, so your data is safe whether the system is attended or not. (PowerChute software and interface kits sold separately.)

And since data processed on networked clients needs protection too, the \$139 Back-UPS 280 provides an economical solution for all your LAN workstations. And if you have a new green PC, the price is even better at \$119 for the new Back-UPS 200.

Discovering how essential Back-UPS protection is



Back-UPS (L to R)	Application	Sugg. List
200	Green PCs, small desktop systems	\$119
280	Desktop systems, LAN nodes, POS	\$139
400	Desktop 486, 386 systems, servers	\$199
450	Tower 486, 386 systems, servers	\$254
600	Heavily configured systems, CAD/CAM workstations	\$359
900	Multiple systems, longer runtime applications	\$529
1250	Multiple systems, LAN hubs, small minis, telecom equipment	\$689



APC has won more awards for performance and reliability than all other UPS vendors combined...including five consecutive LAN Times Readers Choice awards...



can be hard...if you wait for the next storm to roll through. But discovering how affordable it has become is easy...

Call today and find out (the easy way) why more than 2,000,000 satisfied users bank on Back-UPS from APC. With more awards than all other brands combined, field-proven reliability, and a two year warranty, Back-UPS are power protection you can purchase with confidence.



AWARD-WINNING FEATURES

Instantaneous backup power beats blackouts and brownouts

Unmatched lightning (tested to UL1449) and surge protection for maximum hardware safety

Network-grade line conditioning and EMI/RFI filters prevent glitches

LAN Interface (on Back-UPS 400 and up) provides automatic shutdown to all major OS: Windows, NT, NetWare, LAN Server, LAN Manager, LANtastic, Unix, OS/2, Vines, AppleShare/System7 and more.

Site diagnostics automatically spot missing ground and reversed polarity, two common miswirings which usually require an electrician's visit to diagnose.

Option switches allow you to customize transfer voltage and alarm settings.

Test Switch for ongoing peace of mind.

2 year warranty and full safety approvals including ISO9001.

\$25,000 Lifetime Equipment Protection

Hot Swappable, User Replaceable Batteries reduce service time, costs by allowing safe removal and replacement of exhausted batteries, while your system stays running.

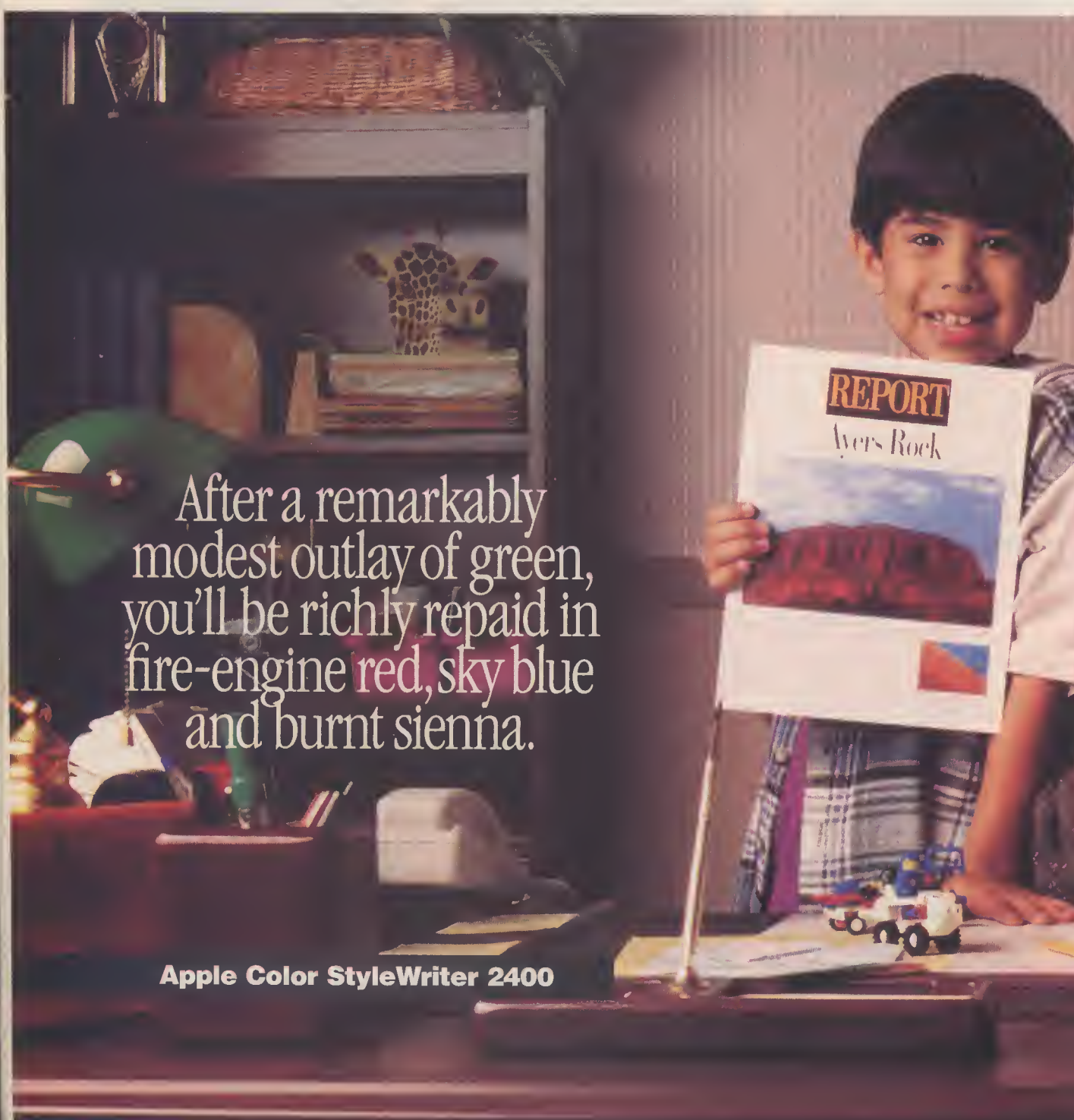
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Apple Peripherals

Until recently, most people could afford to express their ideas in exactly one shade: black. But with the immensely affordable Apple® Color StyleWriter® 2400, you can explore your ideas in living color, whether you're creating a marketing proposal, a neighborhood newsletter or (if you happen to be in 6th Grade) a report on Australia. This ink-jet printer prints at 360 dots per inch resolution, adding impact to your work with sharp-looking text and solid, vibrant colors. Your transparencies turn out crisp and vivid. And thanks to Apple's unique ColorSync® technology, the piece of your pie chart that looks fuchsia on-screen will still



After a remarkably
modest outlay of green,
you'll be richly repaid in
fire-engine red, sky blue
and burnt sienna.

Apple Color StyleWriter 2400

be fuchsia in your document. We've also included 64 TrueType® fonts (more than most printers in this price range), so you can say what you need to say the way it needs to be said. If your office space is limited, you'll appreciate the compact industrial design of the Color StyleWriter 2400. If, on the other hand, you work in a group, Apple's ColorShare™ technology makes it easy to share your color printer over an Ethernet, TokenTalk® or LocalTalk® network. All this, and the Color StyleWriter 2400 costs only a little more than a black-and-white printer. Which means you can now afford to print in periwinkle and chartreuse, if you're so inclined.



h o t s t u f f !

COOL PRODUCTS AND THE LATEST TRENDS

BY THE EDITORS OF HOMEPc



We all know a Bob. We laugh at Bob Hope, watch Bob Dole on the evening news; hey, Bob's your uncle. So, when Microsoft developers designed a program that puts a friendlier face on Windows 3.1, what do you suppose they named it? Microsoft Bob (about \$99—and

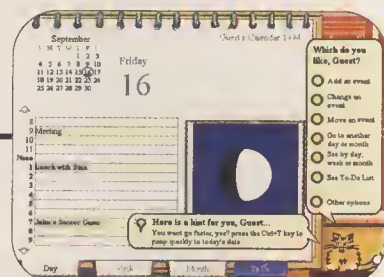
Meet 'Bob': Windows 3.1 for the average Joe

yes, that really is its name). Instead of clicking on impersonal icons, you click on cozy home furnishings—mail boxes, calendars, clocks—in a cheery room to launch eight built-in programs or any other Windows software. Bob's 11 cartoon sidekicks help you accomplish every task, and each has a distinct personality—from helpful and loyal (Rover, a tail-wagging mutt) to hip and hyper (the coffee-gulping Java Dragon) to downright annoying (Chaos the cat, who scratches incessantly if you don't pay her enough attention). The eight programs—Letter Writer, Address Book, E-mail, Checkbook, Financial Guide, Calendar, Household Manager and GeoSafari, an educational game for the kids—are basic but surprisingly handy. Bob *is* a bit greedy: He needs a 486-based PC with 8 megabytes (MB) of memory and about 33 MB of storage space. But what's a little space and power between friends?

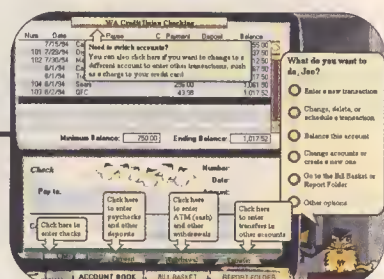
Microsoft, (800) 426-9400, (206) 882-8080.



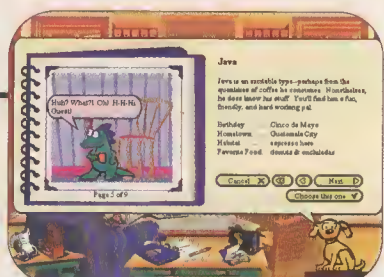
Bob puts its stamp on common PC functions by making them as intuitive as possible.



Can't recall what day your appointment was? Click the wall calendar to open your datebook.



Don't worry about leaving your checkbook on the table; Bob will look out for it.



Bob's menagerie includes 11 on-screen pals who assist you every step of the way.



If the pages of your *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue quickly get dog-eared, feast your eyes on this: The Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Calendar on Windows CD-ROM (\$29.95). Use the program to create custom calendars—from wallet- to wall-

Some consider it computer dating...

sized—adorned with any of 70 photos of today's hottest models, including Kathy Ireland, Rachel Hunter and Elle Macpherson. You can also design refill pages for personal organizers such as Day Runner, and the program comes with a screen saver and Windows wallpaper—so you can ogle Vendela all day long.

Softkey International, (800) 323-8088, (617) 494-1200.

For years, Etch A Sketch had you—and your parents—thinking you might be a great artist: You'd twist the knobs, send pencil-like lines skidding haphazardly across the screen and produce something resembling Picasso's *Guernica*. Now, your kids can twiddle

Just don't shake your PC screen to erase it

those familiar knobs in Windows software (\$29.95), but with color lines, animated effects, games and sound. Of course, some things never change—it still takes lots of practice to draw a perfect circle.

ScreenMagic, (800) 339-2947, (415) 648-8056.



Beavis and Butt-head have probably broken a few windows in their day, and they know a lot about on-screen burnout. So who better to star in a new CD-ROM screen saver for Windows? The disc (\$34.95) features 85 video

He said 'hard disk'...huh, huh, huh

clips displaying their oddly engaging—if anti-social—adventures, with four examples of the boys at their best as they comment on heavy-metal music videos. It's probably as close to a PC as these two underachievers will ever get.

Sony Imagesoft, (800) 922-7669, (310) 449-2320.





Now there's a new way to gobble up the gossip. People: 20 Years of Pop Culture (\$29.95, Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM) comes packed with, well, people—1,038 cover stories in all, from Princess Diana to Prince. You also get a trivia quiz, best- and worst-

People presents a CD-ROM to Di for

dressed lists, and nine morphing segments that let you watch stars such as Michael Jackson and Cher undergo on-screen surgery right before your eyes.

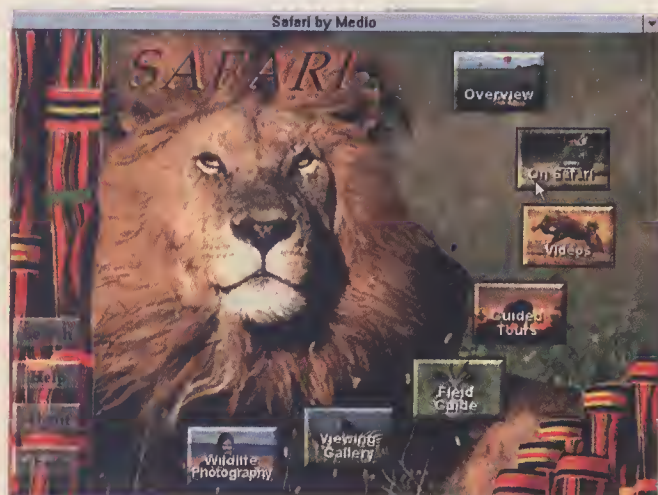
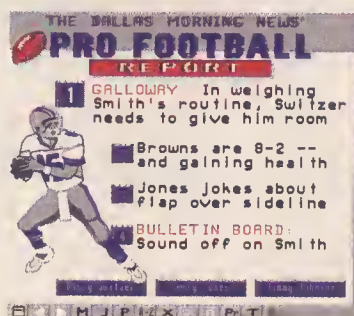
Voyager, (800) 446-2001, (212) 431-5199.

If you're a loyal Dallas Cowboys fan, you may consider a trip to the Super Bowl a divine right, but what happens when it's all over? Try huddling up with *The Dallas Morning News' Pro Football Report* on Prodigy (Jump DMN). In the off-season,

How 'bout them Cowboys? Join the scrimmage on-line

the service will contain "America's Team" player bios and trade and draft news to tide you over until the next kickoff, plus a bulletin board for fervent fans. Next season, check in for in-progress game reports, post-game summaries, and scores and highlights from other games around the league.

Prodigy, (800) PRODIGY.



Have you ever wanted to move so close to a lion cub that you could hear its playful growl in your ear? Now you can, thanks to Safari, a new Windows CD-ROM (\$59.95). The disc whisks you to East Africa, where you'll meet creatures from predatory cheetahs to

Welcome to the interactive jungle

graceful gazelles. More than 40 videos and 800 photos by renowned lensman Jonathan Scott bring the beasts to life, and the interactive tour contains a wildlife encyclopedia. The best part? This trip to Tanzania doesn't require any shots.

Medio, (800) 788-3866, (206) 867-5500.

One extra large helping of urban reality, served up on a silver platter.



Drop this silver platter in your CD-ROM drive and feast your

eyes on the *pièce de résistance* of simulated games: the SimCity 2000® CD Collection—three complete SimCity 2000 products on one CD.

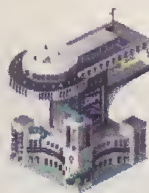
This cityscape is so real you can taste it. Go ahead, expand your subway before breakfast.

Terraform your landscape after lunch. Reshape your

And forget buying add-ons: the CD

Collection comes complete with all of

SimCity 2000's a la carte items. The



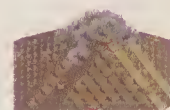
*Urban Renewal Kit:
Point the town with
color-cycling animation.*

Urban Renewal Kit allows you to customize buildings and graphics—you literally can paint the town.

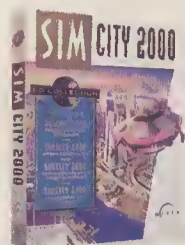
Scenarios Volume 1 makes it all too real—you'll wrestle with 10 real disasters in 10 real U.S. cities.

And bonus cities and scenarios further extend your

city limits. So dig in to the ultimate city simulator. The SimCity 2000 CD Collection is now served.



*Scenarios Volume 1:
Take on Mount St. Melon's
and 9 other disasters.*



Three SimCity 2000 Products on One CD.

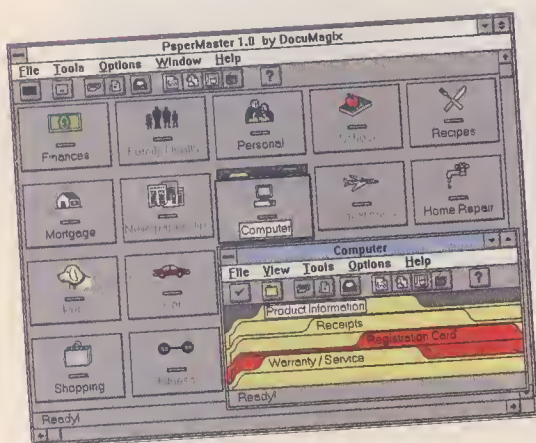


It's Nov. 23, 1963, the day after the *unsuccessful* attempt on President Kennedy's life. You're JFK—what do you do now? In *Reelect JFK* (\$49.95, Windows CD-ROM), you become a presidential Perry Mason as you probe for clues on your would-be killer while working

What if JFK lived to run another day?

for re-election. The disc includes authentic '60s video, but hindsight isn't always 20/20: You'll make dozens of tough decisions on issues from Vietnam to civil rights and sort through—Oliver Stone, are you listening?—72 theories about your near-death experience.

Compton's NewMedia, (800) 862-2206, (619) 929-2500.



If you want to store your bills, faxes and other paper documents electronically but worry that you won't know where to find them once you do, check out *PaperMaster* (\$169), an on-screen file

File this one under 'I' for Intuitive Interface

cabinet for Windows. Just pop your scanned documents into on-screen folders and toss them into an on-screen drawer. Best of all, if you regularly scan in certain documents—say, monthly phone bills—the program automatically routes them to the right place.

Documagix, (800) 362-8624, (408) 434-1138.

Ever wish you could use your favorite coffee-table art books on your computer? Well, for a limited time Corel is selling its *ArtShow 5* and *The World's Best Digital Photographs* books and CD-ROMs (Windows and Macintosh) for \$69. That's 2,500 pieces of artwork and

Pictures for a PC exhibition

120 photos to spice up your newsletters, screen savers, greeting cards, wrapping paper and other computer projects.

Corel, (800) 772-6735, (613) 728-8200. •





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Rebel Assault™ was pretty. *The 7th Guest™* had fun puzzles. ■ But, technology advances. Gamers demand more and more. And the time comes when even the best products are moved aside to make way for the future. ■ That time has come and the future is *Cyberia™*. ■ Featuring full-screen, full motion video, digitized speech, synthetic actors, music and sound effects by Thomas Dolby's Headspace and 11 of the most unbelievable arcade sequences your eyes (and your computer screen) have ever seen... it's so stunning that we're even willing to put our money where our mouth is. If you own *Rebel Assault* or *The 7th Guest*, send us the manual cover from either game along with a *Cyberia* sales receipt and we'll send you \$10.00 cash back. If you don't own either of these titles, you've already saved a hundred bucks so stop waiting for a hand out... just go to your local software retailer to buy *Cyberia* or call 1-800-969-GAME to order direct. ■ (offer expires 3-1-95)

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Interplay

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- IBM PC QOS 6.3, Microsoft® Windows 3.11, PFS: Window-Works™, Quicken Special Edition, Reuters® Money™ Network, FaxWorks™, The PRODIGY® Service with IBM Club™, Journalist™, America Online®, IBM Connection™, IBM Online Housecall (online diagnostics)

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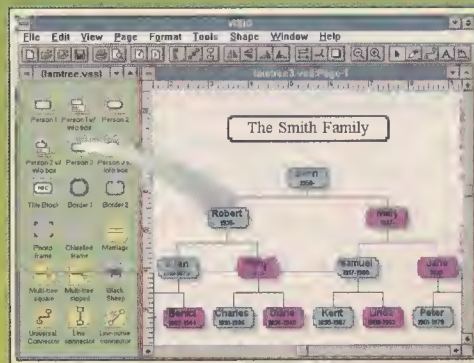
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**family tree. Your son drew a
football team.
the dog added
a sleeping loft to
his place. *Okay, you helped the dog.***



So you can't draw your way out of a paper bag. No problem. Using Visio Home is cake. Choose a shape from the stencil. Drag it and drop it on your drawing page. Type to add text. And you're done. In technical terms: Drag. Drop. Done. And if you ever need any help just click on the right mouse button. Pretty nifty stuff, huh?



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BY JULIE COHEN

Reach into this CD wallet, grab a '10'

Duplicating the success of 5 Ft. 10 Pak, a best-seller for the past six months, may seem like a tall order. But here comes 5 Ft. 10 Pak, Volume Two, which offers 10 more Windows and DOS CD-ROMs—sold separately for more than \$300—for just \$29.95.

These aren't new programs (they date from 1991 to 1993), but they are good ones (titles include *Battle Chess Enhanced*; *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*; and *Dr. Schueler's Home Medical Advisor*). You also get coupons for add-ons and upgrades, from a



\$29.95 microphone to a 10-pack of disc cases (\$8.99)—perfect for storing all your new CD-ROMs.

Sirius Publishing, (602) 951-3255; (800) 247-0307.

Discounts or dishonor? You decide

Ever wonder about the difference between those \$99 "competitive upgrade" versions of top-selling software and the full-price editions?



We did. So we bought the "upgrade versions" of Microsoft Word for Windows 6.0 and WordPerfect for Windows 6.0a. Surprise! The upgrade versions are exactly the same as those meant for first-time buyers.

By offering deep discounts on popular programs, Microsoft, WordPerfect and other software giants hope to entice current customers to spend a few more bucks for the new version or coax rivals' customers to switch. First-time buyers are excluded—in theory. The Word box, for example, warns, "The enclosed program will search your system to confirm that you are a licensed user of a qualifying program."

Nevertheless, Word searched our hard disk for a word processor, didn't find one, informed us twice that we didn't qualify—and then allowed us to install and use the program by clicking "Continue." WordPerfect installed and ran without so much as a red flag.

Is it *illegal* to buy an upgrade package when you don't qualify? "It's definitely not ethical, and it's possibly fraudulent," says Paul Goodman, a partner in the New York law firm Elias, Goodman and Shanks. Susan Weeber, a product manager for Microsoft Word, says, "We believe our customers are honest and wouldn't buy the upgrade if

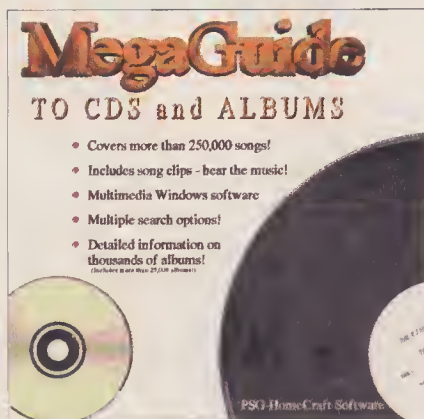
they didn't [qualify]." WordPerfect product marketing manager Jeff Hunsaker says the company expects retailers to ask customers for proof of qualification—but neither store we shopped at did so.

As for Goodman, he believes "the chance of any repercussions [to the consumer] are nil."

Buy this disc for a song

How does an inexpensive CD-ROM that helps you get the most out of your stereo's CD player sound? The MegaGuide to CDs and Albums, a comprehensive catalog of 25,000 music recordings, is available at an introductory price of \$29.95 until June.

The MegaGuide lists every album to hit *Billboard* magazine's Top 200 chart since 1954, thousands of other titles and more than 12,000 short, offbeat music



clips. You can search by artist, title, year or record label.

Subsequent volumes will sell for \$49.95 each and focus on specific genres. Next up: An in-depth look at current CDs, scheduled for release in March.

PSG Homecraft, (503) 692-3732.

\$25 hires a custom retailer

Nordstrom, the tony department store renowned for its customer service, is extending its personal touch to shoppers with home computers.

Top of the charts

Education

- 1 **Encarta**Microsoft
- 2 **Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing**The Software Toolworks
- 3 **Bookshelf**Microsoft
- 4 **Math Blaster: In Search of Spot**Davidson
- 5 **BodyWorks**Software Marketing
- 6 **Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?**Broderbund Software
- 7 **The Oregon Trail**MECC
- 8 **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia**Compton's NewMedia
- 9 **Cliffs StudyWare for the S.A.T. I***Cliffs Notes
- 10 **Mario Teaches Typing**Interplay

Games

- 1 **Myst**Broderbund Software
- 2 **TIE Fighter**LucasArts
- 3 **5 Ft. 10 Pak**Sirius Publishing
- 4 **Outpost**Sierra On-Line
- 5 **SimCity 2000**Maxis
- 6 **Star Wars Rebel Assault**LucasArts
- 7 **The 7th Guest**Virgin Interactive
- 8 **Flight Simulator**Microsoft
- 9 **The Best of Microsoft Entertainment Pack***Microsoft
- 10 **X-Wing**LucasArts

Personal productivity

- 1 **Quicken for Windows**Intuit
- 2 **Quicken 6.0 (MS-DOS)**Intuit
- 3 **Print Shop Deluxe for Windows**Broderbund Software
- 4 **Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble**Broderbund Software
- 5 **Home Design 3-D for Windows**Expert Software
- 6 **Calendar Creator Plus***Softkey International
- 7 **3-D Home Architecture**Broderbund Software
- 8 **PrintMaster Gold**Micrologix
- 9 **Key CAD***Softkey International
- 10 **Money for Windows**Microsoft

Source: PC Data (for September 1994). * indicates first time on charts.

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We're the leading direct market manufacturer of personal computers in the U.S. with a high-flying focus on family computing. Starting as low as \$1,499, our full line of Family PC multimedia systems come totally equipped for today's computer whiz-kids. Every Gateway 2000 Family PC multimedia computer includes a fast CD-ROM drive and high-quality sound system that runs the best programs and games with exciting sound, pictures, animation and video.

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And for pure relaxation, enjoy the wonders of Torrey Pines with a round of Microsoft Multimedia Golf.

As you prepare your children for the future, you'll know you're buying from a solid company that will be here to support you. All Gateway Family PC multimedia computers include a three-year warranty and toll-free telephone technical support for the life of your system. We accept most major credit cards, or you can apply for the Gateway 2000 DuoLine™ MasterCard® card issued by Dial National Bank in Des Moines, Iowa. Our friendly sales representatives are standing by at the home office in North Sioux City, South Dakota. Call us today and fasten your seatbelt for an exciting future in multimedia computing!



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Nordstrom's "personal shopper" service is now available via modem to subscribers of the electronic Nordstrom Connection. Just fill out an on-screen form detailing your sizes, preferred styles and favorite

The image shows two overlapping windows from the Nordstrom Connection software. The top window, titled "Personal Profile", contains fields for Name, Hair Color, Eye Color, Birthday, Anniversary, and Occupation. It also has radio buttons for "Male" and "Female", and "Ok" and "Cancel" buttons. The bottom window, titled "Shipping Information", contains fields for Name, Company Name, Street Address 1, Street Address 2, City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code, and Country. It also has a "Update Preferences" button and a "Help" button. The Nordstrom logo is visible in the center of the shipping window.

colors to get that personal touch. You can even record important dates, and your personal shopper will contact you at gift-giving time.

The Nordstrom Connection has a onetime fee of \$25, which includes an MCI mailbox and Windows software from ConnectSoft. MCI's \$35 annual mailbox charge is waived for the first year.

ConnectSoft, (800) 234-9497, (206) 827-6467.

Off to Zork? Get the excursion fare

If you've finally finished playing Return to Zork but can't get your head out of the Zorkgeist, zero in on The Zork Anthology. For just \$19.95, you get the five Zork adventures that preceded the enor-

mously popular Return to Zork on one DOS CD-ROM (see the June 1994 issue of *HomePC* for our four-star review of Return to Zork).

The Zork Anthology includes Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Beyond Zork and Zork



Top of the charts

CD-ROM

- 1 **Myst**Broderbund Software
- 2 **5 Ft. 10 Pak**Sirius Publishing
- 3 **Outpost**Sierra On-Line
- 4 **Star Wars Rebel Assault**LucasArts
- 5 **The 7th Guest**Virgin Interactive
- 6 **Corel Gallery**Corel
- 7 **Encarta**Microsoft
- 8 **Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble**Broderbund Software
- 9 **Police Quest IV**Sierra On-Line
- 10 **Falcon Gold Flight Simulator**Spectrum Holobyte

Macintosh education

- 1 **Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing**The Software Toolworks
- 2 **The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia**Grolier
- 3 **Mario Teaches Typing**Interplay
- 4 **Kid Pix 2**Broderbund Software
- 5 **Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?**Broderbund Software
- 6 **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia***Compton's NewMedia
- 7 **New Math Blaster Plus**Davidson
- 8 **The Oregon Trail**MECC
- 9 **Reader Rabbit 1**The Learning Company
- 10 **Just Grandma and Me**Broderbund Software

Macintosh games

- 1 **Myst**Broderbund Software
- 2 **SimCity 2000**Maxis
- 3 **Chessmaster 3000**The Software Toolworks
- 4 **Star Wars Rebel Assault**LucasArts
- 5 **Links Pro**Access Software

Macintosh personal productivity

- 1 **Quicken**Intuit
- 2 **Print Shop Deluxe**Broderbund Software
- 3 **Key CAD**Softkey International
- 4 **Aldus HomePublisher**Aldus
- 5 **WillMaker**Nolo Press

Source: PC Data (for September 1994). * indicates first time on charts.



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— Computer Shopper 3/94

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package..."*

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prices around for a laser-quality device."*

— PC World 11/93

*"...buy one and your printer woes will be
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— Computer Shopper 12/93

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— PC Week 12/20/93

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— BYTE Magazine 9/93

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— Compute 12/93

"...The thing is so darn friendly!"

— Computing Now, 12/93

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Computing Now, 01/94



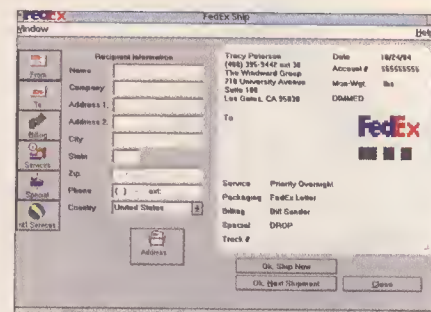
Zero. Don't expect the gripping graphics of *Return to Zork*, though; these adventures are strictly text, requiring you to use your imagination, ingenuity and keyboard to survive. The technology may seem quaint, but this classic collection won't disappoint any hard-core game buff.

Activision, (800) 477-3650, (310) 473-9200.

Package deals deliver free software

So Valentine's Day has snuck up on you again, and you've got one day to get your package to your sweetheart? Then you'll love the free software programs for Windows from Federal Express and United Parcel Service that make shipping and tracking packages a snap. All you need is a computer, a modem and a laser printer.

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Federal Express, (800) 463-3339; United Parcel Service, (800) 742-5877. •



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emoción f emotion; (entusiasmo) excitement; (estremecimiento) shudder; (extensión) extension; (profundidad) depth; (movimiento) movement; (thrill) thrill

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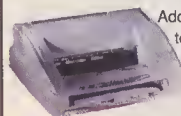
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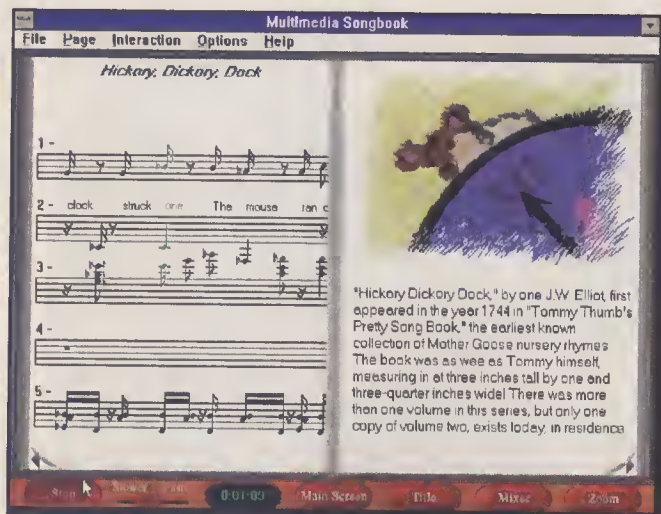


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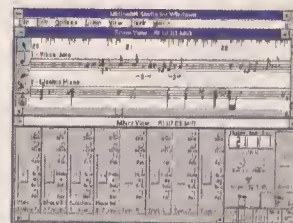
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fun and games

GREAT ESCAPES FOR GROWN-UPS



Under a Killing Moon
Access
Software
(Mystery)

Under a Killing Moon snuck up on me like a good mystery novel. I curled into my office chair and played this live-action detective game long into the night, desperate to find each new clue and explore every venue, utterly oblivious to the passage of time.

As in many good whodunits, the plot revolves around a sympathetic,



the way to solve the puzzles, which are logical enough once you find the right objects. But that's the tricky part, since small, critical items are often well-hidden. (Beginners can use the extensive on-screen hint system, which delivers just the right clues at just the right time.)

It takes four CDs to hold the program, and the action unfolds at breakneck speed. Movement is close to film-quality, and the acting is unusually good by multimedia com-

puter game standards. Hollywood vets Brian Keith, Margot Kidder

and James Earl Jones get top billing, but the real star of this show is Chris Jones, who portrays Tex.

Although the game's stated minimum requirements are a 386/25 PC with a standard CD-ROM and 4 megabytes (MB) of RAM, don't believe it:

The action demands a 486 with VESA local bus, Super VGA display, double-speed CD-ROM drive and at least 8 MB of RAM. But if you have a less advanced system and need an excuse to upgrade, Under a Killing Moon just may be it.

\$99.95 (DOS CD-ROM) from Access Software, (800) 800-4SS0, (501) 359-2900.

Here's how a '40s whodunit will look in the 21st century

street-smart hero and has enough twists to hold your attention for hours, if not days. You play as Tex Murphy, a down-and-out gumshoe in post-apocalyptic San Francisco circa 2042. Genetic purity is the hot-but-



ton issue of the day, separating the Mutants from the Norms. Now, a band of Norms has set out to rid the world of "impure" Mutants, and as Tex—a Norm with a conscience—it's your job to stop them.

You have six days (by the game's calendar) to solve a variety of mysteries, each of which pulls you deeper into the story. You'll have run-ins with Mutants and Norms alike, and you'll have to use your wits and the items you collect along

Also reviewed in Fun and Games

- Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time
- Picture Perfect Golf
- Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual
- U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D
- Blown Away
- JigSoft
- System Shock

★ **Reading the stars:** Each program reviewed in this section is rated on a scale of 0 to 4 stars based on originality, puzzle difficulty, longevity, writing, characters, interface, learning curve, graphics, music and sound effects, user's manual and quirks.

by julie cohen

The perfect cutups

**Monty Python's
Complete
Waste of Time**
7th Level
**(Comedy,
mystery)**

The bad news is, Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time is just what the title says it is. The good news is, this hilarious, brilliantly designed CD-ROM makes wasting time more fun than ever.

Fans will see all their favorite clips from the BBC-TV series *Monty Python's Flying Circus* in new ways here. Satirical gems from the Lumberjack Song to the Spanish Inquisition (by now, you must have expected the Spanish Inquisition) are



scattered within the six lobes of Mrs. Zambesi's brain, which serves as your main menu. There's the Loonatorium, home of flying loonies; the Exploding TV Room, where every mouse click detonates something; the Corridor, which magically transforms



into a pinball table; the Portrait Gallery, which sometimes turns into a slot machine; Test Your Skill, which includes three classic arcade games (The Chicken Game, featuring flatulent fowl; the Gopher Game, a whack-a-mole knock-off; and the Pig Game, complete with porcine poop); and the Pythonizer, which makes this program a Complete Waste of Space, too, with screen savers, Windows wallpaper and silly icons.

Far be it from the clever Pythons to deliver a mere TV anthology; this is also a complicated mystery that asks you to uncover the secret to intergalactic success. 7th Level, which creat-



ed this Waste of Time along with four of the six troupe members—Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Michael Palin and Terry Jones—will award a Pentium-based multimedia computer to the four fanatics who find the secret fastest.

But the mystery is so well concealed, solving it may be as daunting as, well, summarizing Proust in 30 seconds. But don't let that stop you. Settle in and savor the program's winning recipe—and don't skimp on the Spam.

\$59.95 (Windows CD-ROM) from 7th Level, (800) 884-8863, (214) 437-4858.

Forewarned is forearmed

**Picture Perfect
Golf**
Lyriq
International
(Simulation)



Picture Perfect Golf smoothly recreates one of America's most popular courses, but the disc's action just isn't up to par.

The game includes thousands of photos of the Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head Island, S.C., a beautiful layout designed by golfing great Jack Nicklaus and golf-course architect Pete Dye. But the panoramic feel of the place is lost on the computer screen, and there's not much challenge here for your game. The program selects your club automatically; all you have to do is use your mouse buttons to hit the ball. If you choose, you can customize your swing; for example, if your shots hook to the left, you can select



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a fade, which will send the ball sailing slightly more to the right.

Other than the photos, though, there's little here that you can't get in Microsoft Golf and Access Links 386. If a picture-perfect golf game is your goal, try hitting a bucket at the driving range instead.

\$79.95 (DOS CD-ROM) from Lyriq International, (800) 433-4464, (203) 250-2070.

That's the *Picard* room and *Data's* base...

**Star Trek:
The Next
Generation
Interactive
Technical
Manual
U.S.S.
Enterprise
NCC-1701-D
Simon &
Schuster
Interactive
(TV, science-
fiction)**

The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D is the last word in 24th century space transportation and intragalactic living.

The Technical Manual is not a game; it's an interactive tour through *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* starship, the *Enterprise*. Start by taking a look at the ship with Commander William T. Riker (portrayed here, as in the TV series, by Jonathan Frakes). You'll walk through the 13 major areas of the *Enterprise*, from the Bridge—the ship's control center—to the quarters of Capt. Jean-Luc Picard, Lt. Commander Data, Counselor Troi and Lt. Worf.

You can leave the tour at any time and enter the interactive mode, which lets you view each of the 13 sections of the ship from up to a dozen angles, moving around the set almost as if you were on board.

Many of the items you see are described in exhaustive detail.

For example, click on the aquarium in Picard's Ready Room (for you non-Trekkers, that's his office), and you'll learn that his prized pet, Livingston, is an Australian lion fish (Scorpinidae Pterois, that is), which can't use its

poisonous ring of spines to attack prey. Dig a little deeper to uncover behind-the-scenes information. (Did you know that Picard's book of Shakespeare is opened to a different page at the beginning of every episode?)

The disc is somewhat difficult to navigate, thanks to obscure menu headings like "Parallels," but once



you get the hang of it, the program makes a terrific trivia transporter.

\$69.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM) from Simon & Schuster Interactive, (800) 953-5333, (310) 793-0600.

A bomb, and puzzles you may refuse

**Blown Away
IVI Publishing
(Puzzle,
adventure)**

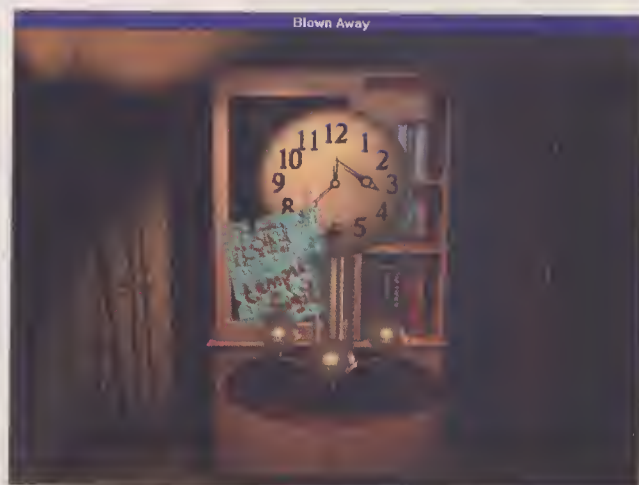
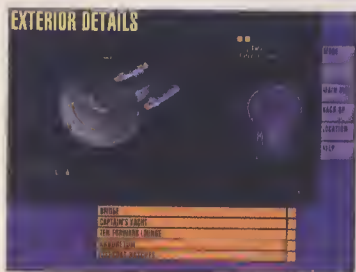
You're more likely to be underwhelmed than blown away by this interactive CD-ROM, loosely based on *Blown Away*, last year's critical and box-office movie bomb.

True, the game's visuals really pop. The full-screen video introduction is dazzling, complete with closeups of a bomb being ignited. Dramatic and suspenseful, the scene quickly draws you into the story of an IRA terrorist who's holding your family and friends hostage.

Unfortunately, the game self-destructs when it's time to stop watching and start playing. Your mission is to solve 24 puzzles before your loved ones get blown away (albeit with great video fanfare).



1/2



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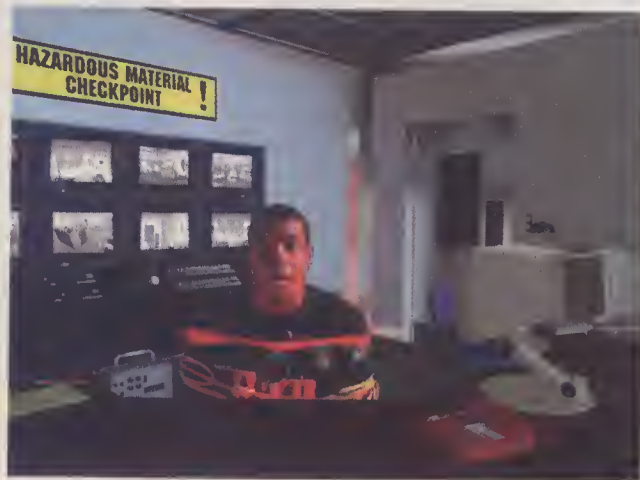
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But while the puzzles are plentiful, too many are hackneyed—tepid versions of the old games Concentration and Simon, for example—and none relates to the plot.

Blown Away is a perfect exam-



ple of multimedia computer gaming's unfulfilled promise. The glitz of big-budget Hollywood production is here; what's missing is compelling content.

\$69.95 (Windows CD-ROM) from IWI Publishing, (800) 432-1332, (612) 996-6000.

Click up the pieces

JigSoft
Electek
(Puzzle)



There are two reasons to buy a program such as JigSoft, a jigsaw puzzle package for your PC. First, you can use it to turn almost any graphics file into a puzzle; second, the pieces never get swept under the rug accidentally.

JigSoft provides 16 pictures, but you can open any graphics file on your computer and scramble that

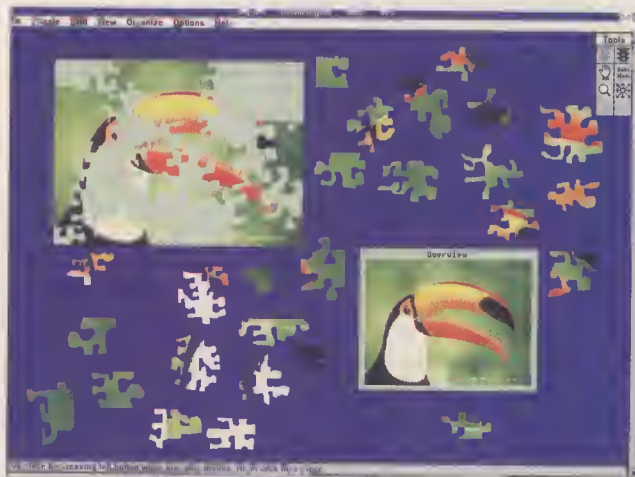


image instead, and it's a good thing—the pictures from the program are deadly dull. There are three skill levels—novice (12 pieces), intermediate (48) and expert (192)—and the program lets you create your own puzzle designs. Decide how many pieces you want per row and column, and Jigsoft gives you a tool to start cutting; markers ensure you end up with the right number.

JigSoft has four distinct playing areas: the main field, in which you assemble the final puzzle; two work areas, which let you focus on small sections of the puzzle; and an overview, which shows you what the completed picture will look like.

Be aware that if your computer display is set to either SuperVGA or 1,024-by-768 resolution, you'll have to move scroll bars to access some puzzle pieces. Perhaps it's the program's way of tossing a couple of pieces under the virtual couch.

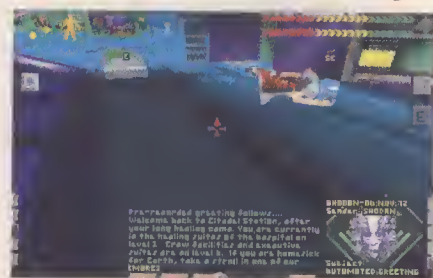
\$59.95 (Windows), from Electek, (800) 344-9798, (503) 344-9799.



Showdown with SHODAN

System Shock
Origin Systems
(Action,
adventure)

You thought HAL was bad in 2001? Seventy-one years after his shenanigans, a self-sufficient artificial intelligence system named SHODAN (Sentient Hyper-Optimized Data Access Network) is threatening to



take over the world in 2072—and his antics put his velvet-voiced predecessor to shame.

System Shock, a fast-paced action-adventure, puts you in the role of Employee 2-4601, a world-renowned hacker. You must defeat SHODAN by gaining access to all nine floors of the Citadel—the research facility in which you're trapped—and killing the zombified mutants, cyborgs and robots that inhabit the building.

Once the robots are out of the way, you have to hack your way



1/2

into SHODAN's central nervous system. The puzzles—many of which require you to find the right doors, then gather the codes to open them—are relentless, and there are enough challenges to keep experienced players busy for days.

Doom fans will like the fast, three-dimensional movement: You explore the Citadel from a first-person, 360-degree viewpoint that, when played in the dazzling full-screen mode, makes you feel as if you're being sucked into your monitor.

But this game's controls are terri-



bly complex. Dozens of buttons clutter the screen, representing everything from your health and energy status to the items in your inventory, logbooks, electronic mailbox and weapons cache. Fortunately, hints help you through the game's first level: Smash a camera as the program advises, for example, and the building's security decreases. (Veteran gamers who don't want such help can easily deactivate the hints.)

Less forgivable is the text, which is nearly impossible to read, even though e-mail messages and logs within the game often contain crucial information.

This game might shock a novice's system, but if you're a budding hacker, the sensory-overload may feel like heaven.

\$79.95 (DOS) from Origin Systems. (500) 245-4525, (512) 335-5200. •

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

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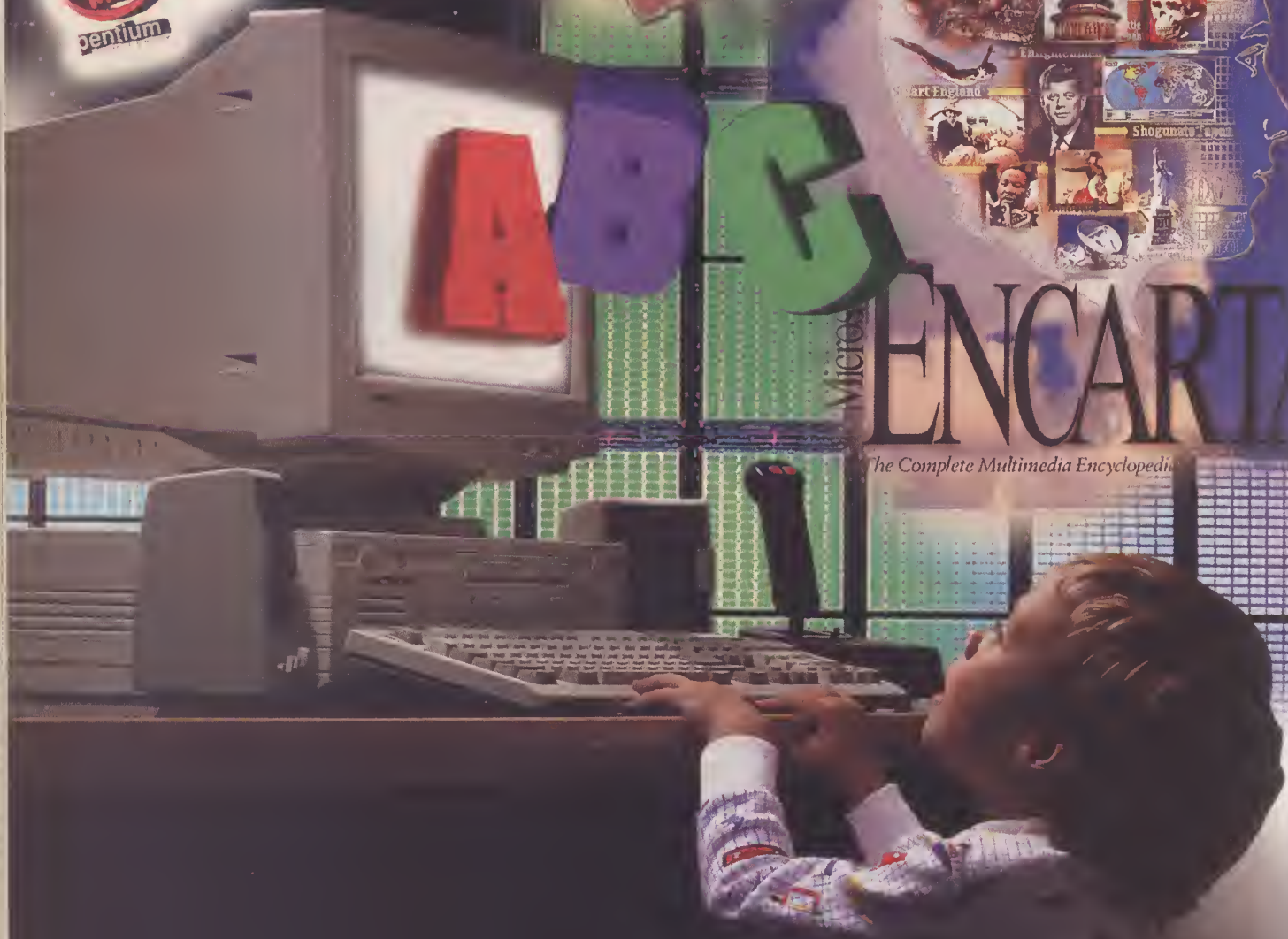


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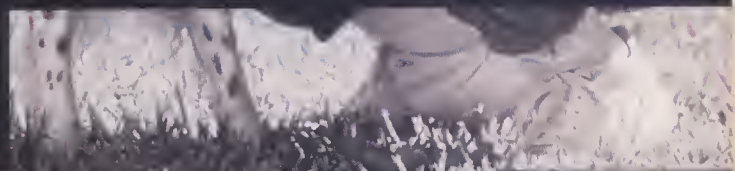
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Why pay for a program before you know if you'll like it? With shareware, you won't have to.

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At a party not long ago, a friend took me aside and whispered conspiratorially, "I have just one word to say to you: Shareware."

Of course, my mind immediately flashed to the Dustin Hoffman character in *The Graduate*, and I was about as eager to open this line of conversation as he was to talk about "plastics" in that film. "Cher wear?" I asked wearily, wondering

b y s t e p h e n b r e w e r

Illustration by Linda Bleck





when my friend had developed a sudden interest in celebrity fashion.

"Shareware. As in computers. It's great software that's cheap."

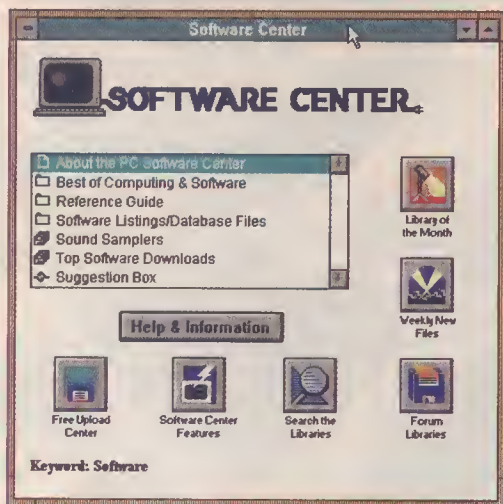
Now he was off and running. "Some of the best software around is shareware," he explained. "Doom—to many aficionados the greatest computer game ever invented—was first introduced as shareware. You can get a shareware program called Daylight Saving Time that sets the clock on your computer ahead one hour in the spring and back one hour in the fall when Standard Time rolls around again. ("Imagine," I sighed.) Hundreds of typographic fonts are available as shareware. There's a program called Sound-Master that installs Mr. Spock's voice saying, 'My sensors indicate nothing unusual, Captain,' every time you boot up your computer. And there are a lot of very serious-minded shareware programs like Mariner—one of the best spreadsheets around—tax-prep software and technical-design packages.



Everybody seems to want to give Doom a shot.

Sharewhere? How to find *bargain software* on-line

There's lots of shareware available on-line; finding it is the hard part. If you sub-



scribe to America Online (AOL), begin your search for shareware at the Main Menu by clicking on the Computing icon and then on the Software Center. Look for the Search the Libraries feature, which lets you enter a keyword to lo-

cate a program by name or topic. Or, click on Best of Computing and Software, which gives you AOL's list of the most frequently downloaded shareware. If a file catches your eye, click on it for a description. To sample the program, click on either Download Now or Download Later.

Another good way to find shareware on AOL is to click on the Go To menu, select Keyword, type "shareware" and hit Search. You'll see a list of 17 forums, organized by subject. Each forum contains dozens of programs, many of them shareware.

You can do the same kind of shareware browsing on CompuServe. Click on the Forums icon in the basic-services menu to

visit different libraries, many of which contain shareware.

CompuServe members who want to use shareware should also look into a subscription to Ziffnet (\$2.95 a month). You'll find the service by clicking on the Computers icon in CompuServe's basic menu. Then click on the icon marked Ziffnet. An icon marked Software Center will pop up. Click on it to go to a library labeled Shareware Highlights.

Next, select either Ziffnet (for DOS or Windows) or Ziffnet/Mac (for Macintosh). This will call up a list of dozens of shareware programs, including descriptions and prices. If you want to download a file, click on Retrieve. —S.B.

"And it's all inexpensive and easy to get..." I heard my friend call toward my back when I managed to wrest myself from his clutches about an hour later.

'Try before you buy'

Truth be told, I was more interested than I let on. I called the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) in Muskegon, Mich., to see what all the fuss was about. "Shareware is a marketing method," explained Jan Abbott, the group's executive director. "Shareware is software that you're allowed to try before you buy." If you like a program and want to continue using it with a clear conscience, you send in your registration fee to the author.

You can sample a shareware program by downloading it (copying it to your disk) from a commercial on-line service, the Internet or a computer bulletin board. America Online (AOL) and CompuServe have large shareware libraries. Prodigy only recently



Treat yourself to Halloween Harry's efforts to trick the zombies.

added the capability to download files, so it has a limited number of shareware programs available. Finding shareware on-line can be a bit tricky, but once you locate the libraries, most programs are clearly marked (see "Sharewhere?" on the opposite page).

It usually takes just a few minutes to download a file, although games and more complex programs such as word processors or databases may take longer. A program's on-screen description typically includes how long it takes to download it and how many bytes it will take up on your disk.

Copying software is often cited as a prime method of spreading computer viruses, but rest assured that on-line services and reputable bulletin boards go to great lengths to screen their programs regularly to ensure that the shareware they offer is untainted. In fact, the shareware's on-screen description often

THE TOP 10: GAMES

- 1 Blake Stone: Aliens of Gold**
As Stone, an agent in Her Majesty's Service, you must stop the demented experiments of maniacal Dr. Goldfire—in 3-D (DOS). *Level 1 free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.*
- 2 Doom**
You're the only surviving marine on a far-off moonbase, but there are lots of demons and mutants—save yourself, save the world (DOS). *Episode 1 free on AOL and CompuServe; \$1 for disk from id Software, (800) 434-2637, (214) 613-3559.*
- 3 Duke Nukem II**
Duke Nukem's got a choice: Escape his alien prison cell, battle the Rigelatins and foil their plans to seize the Earth, or become a mindless zombie. Rigelatins, beware... (DOS). *One mission free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.*
- 4 Epic Pinball**
Turn your PC into a pinball arcade complete with sound and music (DOS). *Game 1 free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Epic MegaGames, (800) 972-7434, (301) 983-9771.*
- 5 Halloween Harry**
Alien invaders are turning humans into zombies. Harry doesn't want to be a zombie. And so, the battle begins (DOS). *First mission \$5 from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.*
- 6 Hocus Pocus**
Does Hocus, a young sorcerer, have what it takes to be a Wizard? This dangerous mission will tell (DOS). *Level 1 free on AOL and CompuServe; \$5 for disk from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.*
- 7 Jazz Jackrabbit**
Join lightning-fast Jazz as he combs the galaxy to save kidnapped bunny princess Eva Earlong (DOS). *Episode 1 free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Epic MegaGames, (800) 972-7434, (301) 983-9771.*
- 8 Raptor**
Pilot the Raptor warship into enemy territory where the rule is kill or be killed (DOS). *One mission free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.*
- 9 Xargon**
Travel through time to the ancient, mystical civilization of Xargon (DOS). *Volume 1 free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Epic MegaGames, (800) 972-7434, (301) 983-9771.*
- 10 Zone 66**
Guide your fighter jet through a huge, enemy-filled playfield (DOS). *Level 1 free on AOL; \$5 for disk from Epic MegaGames, (800) 972-7434, (301) 983-9771.*

Source: FormGen (ranking as of October 1994)



tells you the last time it was checked for viruses. Nevertheless, to play it safe, only download shareware programs that have been available for a few weeks (the date a file is made available is posted with its description). That way, it's more likely that any viruses or glitches have been detected and removed.

The only up-front expense of trying shareware that's posted on-line is the cost of connecting to the service that makes it available. The faster your modem, the less time you'll spend downloading a file. (For more information on modems, see "Modemmania" in the November 1994 issue of *HomePC*.) Once you download a file or program, follow its instructions on how to register and pay for it.

If you're not an on-line service subscriber, you can find some shareware programs in retail shops, often displayed in no-frills packaging and selling for as little as \$5. You can also order shareware through the mail at prices around \$5 (for some mail-order sources of shareware, see sidebar below). In these cases, you're paying for the disk itself—you can try the programs, but you don't have the right to use them legally until you pay the author the registration fee.

The amount you'll pay to register a program can vary widely. Makers of fonts and many basic utility programs such as clocks and file compressors often charge about \$15 to \$20; a spreadsheet or desktop publishing

program might cost \$50. Generally, you'll pay half to two-thirds less for a shareware program than for a comparable commercial package. Once you register, many shareware authors send you a printed manual and alert you when updates become available; some, but not all, charge an additional fee for upgrades.



For Amy's First Primer, parents count to \$15.

Shareware registration fees can be as creative as the programs themselves. Dave Rakowski, who markets unusual Windows and Mac fonts as shareware on AOL, requests that users make a donation to the music department at Columbia University in New York, where he teaches. The proceeds are used to hire professional musicians to perform students' compositions. Mac users on AOL or CompuServe who download and use Reminder, a program for writing and posting

No cyberspace account? You can still find *down-to-earth* prices

Even if you don't subscribe to an on-line service, you can still take advantage of shareware. The Association of Shareware Publishers (ASP) publishes a CD-ROM for DOS and Windows that includes 1,200 shareware programs written by its members. If you see a program you want to buy, you can register directly with the author.

To order the CD-ROM, send \$26.95 (includes shipping) to the ASP, 545 Grover Road, Muskegon, MI 49442, or call (616) 788-5131.

The ASP also publishes a DOS-compatible catalog disk that describes more than 2,000 shareware programs. The disk lists the price of each program; whether the program is designed for DOS, Windows or Macintosh; and the author's name, address and, in some cases, telephone number. It also lists nearly 500 bulletin-board systems across the country that offer shareware programs written by ASP members. If you decide to keep the DOS disk, the ASP asks that you mail in a \$7.50 check.

Several mail-order software distributors offer shareware through their catalogs. The programs listed in the catalogs usually cost about \$5, which includes shipping—you pay the registration fee to the author separately. The following companies offer free catalogs:

- **Public Brand Software**, (800) 426-3475, fax: (617) 374-4007.
- **Public (software) Library**, (800) 242-4775, (713) 524-6394.
- **Software Excitement**, (800) 444-5457, (503) 734-2406. —S.B.

electronic notes on screen, are asked to send "whatever amount you feel it is worth."

Authors of game shareware have a particularly clever way of marketing their products. They often design their games as trilogies, and make the first episode in the series available for free. They're gambling that you'll get hooked on the game and buy the next two installments, which are sold commercially. In the case of Doom, the authors hit the jackpot—their game has become a national phenomenon. The first nine levels of the popular game for DOS and Windows are available free on AOL and CompuServe. If you want to play the next two episodes, each of which contains nine new levels, you have to cough up \$40.

Shareware vs. 'otherware'

When you start browsing on-line, you'll find a lot of programs that are free or inexpensive that are not shareware. The ASP, which represents about 500 authors, has devised strict standards for what constitutes shareware.



How quickly can you type 'inexpensive'? Check out PC-Fasttype.

According to the association, a shareware program must be a complete package that performs all the normal functions of software of its type. (Many manufacturers distribute free copies of so-called "demoware" to give potential buyers a taste of the product; however, the manufacturers disable a major function of the program so it can't be used to its full capacity.) Shareware also must be copyrighted so it doesn't fall into the public domain. And unlike "freeware"—software that is offered free to the public because the author wants to get it into the market—shareware must be registered by the user and, in most cases, can't be used for free—at least not legally.

Many freeware programs show up alongside shareware in on-line menus. A lot of

THE TOP 10: EDUCATION

1 Adventure Math

Kids earn entry to the animated arcade by solving math problems (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe; \$29 registration fee (includes manual and technical support); \$5 for disk from Epic MegaGames, (800) 972-7434, (301) 983-9771.

2 Amy's First Primer

Six games help children age 4 to 8 learn the alphabet and numbers (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or write Rob Robinsou, 523 Albany Ave. NE, Orange City, IA 51041; \$15 registration fee.

3 Beginner's Guide to the Internet

A primer covering e-mail, newsgroups, access methods and more (DOS). Available on CompuServe, or call Suarez Associates, (513) 323-6121; \$25 registration fee (includes one upgrade).

4 Bert's Dinosaurs

This children's art program includes facts and information on the prehistoric giants (DOS). Available on AOL, or write Theron, P.O. Box 595, Muskegon, MI 49443; \$20 registration fee.

5 Big Dummy's Guide to the Internet

The full text of the book of the same name (DOS). Free on AOL and CompuServe, or call Electronic Frontier Foundation, (202) 544-9237 (donations are accepted).

6 C++ Tutor

An instructional course for the C++ programming language (DOS). Available on AOL, or call Coronado Enterprises, (505) 293-5464; \$15 registration fee (\$39.95 for registration and printed manuscript).

7 Earth Centered Universe

Enter your geographic location and the time and see the local sky simulated on your screen (Windows). Available on CompuServe and the Internet, or call Nora Astronomics, (902) 443-5989; \$35 registration fee.

8 Math Rescue

An arcade-style game for children that features number and word problems (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe; \$19 registration fee (includes manual and technical support); \$5 for disk from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.

9 PC-Fasttype

Learn how to type or improve your speed and accuracy (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call Trendtech, (201) 694-8622; \$25 registration fee.

10 Word Rescue

Benny Bookworm teaches children reading, vocabulary and word recognition (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe; \$19 registration fee (includes manual and technical support); \$5 for disk from Apogee, (800) 426-3123, (214) 278-5655.

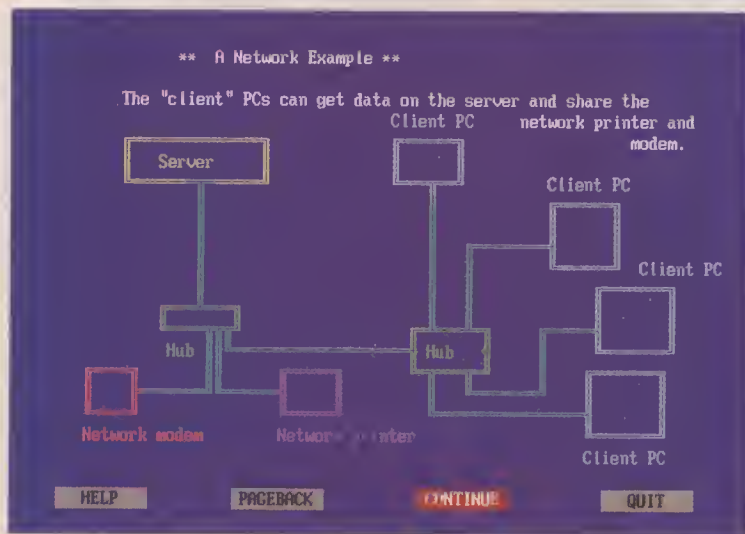
Source: FormGen (ranking as of October 1994)



fonts, for example, are available as freeware—they're yours for the taking, no strings attached. And as with shareware registration fees, many freeware authors show creativity in their distribution strategies. For example, Steve Christensen, who designed SuperClock (available on AOL and CompuServe), an on-screen clock for the Macintosh that chimes the hour and can be set like an alarm clock, tells users they can have the program free but suggests that they send a donation to the Lucille Salter Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif.

Shareware's free spirits

Shareware has many advantages besides its reasonable cost. One is originality. A lot of free spirits burn the midnight oil writing quirky programs to impress and assist their computer-loving peers. After all, it costs a shareware author nothing but his or her own time and effort to design a program and upload, or copy, it to an on-line service or bulletin board—or send it off to software vendors in the hope they will include it in their catalogs. Many programs that cater to a select audience turn up as shareware because large software companies are most interested in marketing products with a broad-based commercial appeal.



Beginner's Guide to the Internet will help you untangle the Web.

A few years ago, Ed Adasiewicz, a computer consultant in Lakeview, Ill., looked at his collection of home-recorded cassettes of pop music from the 1960s and 1970s and realized he couldn't read the notes he'd scribbled on the cassette liners. He sat down at his computer and designed an easy-to-use program for Windows that lets users print out liner notes for cassette tapes. He calls the program Caselinir and distributes it on

THE TOP 10: ODDS & ENDS

- 1 Cross-Stitch Designer**
Create cross-stitch patterns using several stitch and color options (Windows). Available on AOL, or call HobbyWare, (317) 595-0565; \$30 registration fee.
- 2 EnVision Publisher**
This full-feature desktop publishing program accepts PCX images and has scalable fonts (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call Software Vision, (813) 545-4354; \$69 registration fee.
- 3 Home Plan**
Draws, saves and prints house plans, including predrawn furniture and appliances (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call Home Plan, (209) 754-4891; \$20 registration fee.
- 4 Phantom Screen**
Screen saver lets you add in scanned or painted PCX images; includes password and time display (DOS). Available on AOL, or call OSCI Software Development, (503) 389-5459; \$25 registration fee.
- 5 PKZIP/PKUNZIP**
Compresses and decompresses files (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call PKWare, (414) 352-3670; \$25 registration fee.
- 6 Snooper**
System information utility that shows CPU speed, DOS, BIOS, memory, disks, video, CD-ROM, ports, IRQs and more. Lets you edit *autoexec.bat* and *config.sys* files (DOS). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call Vias and Associates, (415) 921-6262; \$39 registration fee.
- 7 Uninstall for Windows**
Helps clean up the messy files left by poorly written installation programs (DOS, accessible from Windows). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call It's Your Money, (201) 663-4577; \$19 registration fee.
- 8 VirusScan**
Recovers infected files, partition tables or boot sectors with unknown viruses (DOS, Windows). Available on AOL and the McAfee forum on CompuServe, or call McAfee Associates, (408) 955-3532; \$25 registration fee.
- 9 WinPak**
A collection of screen savers, fonts and icons (Windows). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call Rhode Island Soft Systems, (500) 959-RISS, (401) 655-4632; \$14.95 registration fee.
- 10 WinZip**
Lets you use the DOS-based PKZIP/PKUNZIP tools with the point-and-click ease of Windows; includes a virus scanner (Windows). Available on AOL and CompuServe, or call Nico Mak Computing, (203) 585-5376; \$29 registration fee.

Source: FormGen (ranking as of October 1994)

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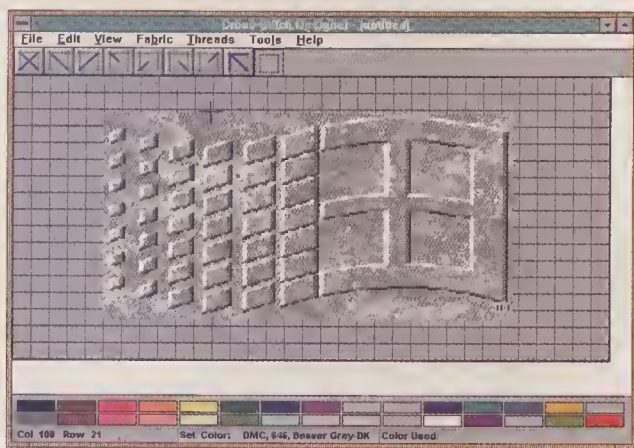
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th



CompuServe and the Internet. Adasiewicz says he's not getting rich off the \$19 he asks users to send him as a registration fee, but "it keeps me in pocket money."

Although it can take months or even years for a commercial software program to hit the market, a shareware author can upload a program and get it out to the public as soon as it's finished. In fact, short of handing out a program on street corners, distributing it as shareware is probably the fastest way for a software designer to get a new program, or an updated version, into circulation. You may find hundreds of brand-new programs available every time you log in to an on-line service.

Seven years ago, Paris Karahalios and Dave Schulz, co-founders of Trius, a company in North Andover, Mass., that develops and markets computer software, delivered their first program, a DOS spreadsheet for engineers and other technical specialists called As Easy As. "We knew we had a program a lot of people could use, but we realized it would be years before we could get it out there at retail, if at all," says Karahalios. "So we began to market it as shareware." Sales for the \$59.95 program soon reached some \$500,000 a year, and As Easy As is now used in 22 countries. (A Windows version is scheduled to be available soon.)



Cross-Stitch Designer is only \$30 for Windows PCs.

Karahalios and Schulz continue to market all their products—which now include several popular computer-aided design (CAD) programs for engineers and architects—as shareware through AOL, CompuServe and bulletin board services, and distribute them through shareware catalogs. "Not only can we get new products out to the marketplace quickly," Karahalios explains, "but we can also get an updated version to our customers right away. All they have to do is download

the latest version of the program."

Since most shareware is distributed by individual authors or small companies, technical support is usually easier to find than it is for commercial software. "It's the difference between calling and speaking with the



Duke Nukem is going to make the Rigelatins pay, but you can play the game bearing his name for free.

guys who wrote the program, or calling a large company and going through a complicated tech support system," says Karahalios. Of course, you may have to wait until the shareware authors you're trying to reach get home from work, and few of them have toll-free numbers.

But that didn't stop me from going on a shareware shopping spree. A few days after talking to my friend at the party, I discovered a library on AOL called Mac Shareware 500. I downloaded a program called World Time that gives me the current local time in 170 cities around the world, another called Address Book that allows me to put my Rolodex on-screen, and some really weird typefaces to jazz up my letters to Mom and Dad.

Then I visited the Ziffnet forum on CompuServe and checked out a library called Shareware Highlights. There, I found the Professional Bartender program, which includes recipes for 100 mixed drinks. And so far I've resisted the urge to download a sound file I can use to play Nancy Sinatra singing "These Boots Are Made for Walking" whenever I turn off my computer.

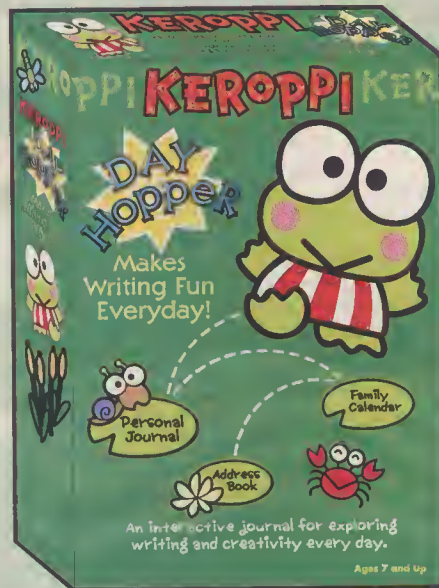
I saw my shareware-crazed friend recently and told him of the many happy hours I've spent perusing the goodies available on AOL and CompuServe.

"So now you, too, can be a bore at parties," he said.

Oh, well. Who has time to go to parties anyway when there's so much great software to hunt down? ♦

Stephen Brewer is a New York-based writer.

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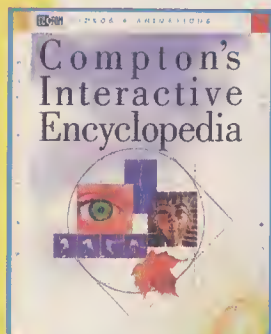
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38029 Christmas In Comfyland.....	20
38028 Comfyland.....	26
36394 Dinosaur Adventure 3-O CO.....	39
36073 Exploring Ancient Architecture CO.....	20
33659 Fatty Bears Fun Pack CO.....	23
37051 Gus Goes to Cyberopolis CD.....	28
33764 Gus Goes to Cybertown CO.....	28
37053 Gus and the Cyberbus Sing&Play CD.....	28
36521 Harry and the Haunted House CO.....	40
36539 Kid Pix Studio CO.....	47
35615 Lion King Print Studio WIN.....	17
35616 Lion King Screen Scenes WIN.....	17
37551 Lion King Storybook CO.....	30
35566 LoveJoys College Counselor CD.....	32
36345 Magic Bear's Masterpieces WIN.....	21
37360 Magic School Bus: Human Body CD.....	43
37361 Magic School Bus: Solar System CO.....	43
35549 Magic Theatre CO.....	27
33902 Mario's Fun with Numbers.....	24
37164 Mario's Game Gallery.....	26
36714 Math Blaster Lost City WIN.....	35
34398 Math Blaster Search of Spot CO.....	34
36523 Math Workshop CO.....	44
36862 Mavis Beacon Typing: Kids WIN.....	27
36808 MusicTime 2.0 CD.....	59

29864 Oregon Trail Deluxe.....	34
36828 Oregon Trail II CD.....	50
37170 Ozzie's World CO.....	30
37292 Peter and the Wolf CO.....	45
33679 Reader Rabbit I WIN.....	35
37995 Reader Rabbit's Interactive CO.....	74
37766 Reading Blaster: Invasion.....	35
33063 SAT I Studyware.....	30
36017 SAT I Studyware CO.....	34
34308 SAT NEW Personal Trainer 2.0 CO.....	34
32960 SAT NEW Personal Trainer 2.0 WIN.....	34
36377 Safety Monkey CO.....	28
36575 SimTown CO.....	33
36758 Thumbelina CO.....	21
37406 Time Shop CO.....	25
36379 Welcome to Bodyland CO.....	28
36763 Where in the World: Junior CO.....	35

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23599 Norton Utilities 8.0 Upgrade.....	90
32821 Opus'n Bill Screen Saver WIN.....	30
32612 PC Tools Pro 9.0.....	88
36050 Pcomm Plus 2.0 WIN.....	127
37261 QEMM 7.5.....	62
28648 Star Trek Screen Saver WIN.....	29
37887 Star Trek: TNG Screen Saver WIN.....	30
21493 WinFax Pro 4.0 WIN.....	80
SPREADSHEETS	
35541 Excel 5.0 Upgrade WIN.....	122
33032 Excel 5.0 WIN.....	316
36138 Lotus 123 5.0 Upgrade WIN.....	97
36137 Lotus 123 5.0 WIN.....	310
37299 Quattro Pro 6.0 CO.....	257

ENTERTAINMENT

32903 11th Hour IBM CO.....	51
29037 7th Guest CO.....	50
23190 Bowling League Secretary 6.0.....	44
33132 Card Collector 3.0 WIN.....	26
26806 Civilization.....	42
35717 Colonization: Sid Meier's.....	46
32782 Comic Collector.....	29
36302 Dark Forces CO.....	46
36320 Doom II: Hell on Earth CO.....	45
35944 Family Feud CO.....	25
36979 Flight Simulator 5.1 CD.....	53
35315 Front Page Sports: Football 95 CO.....	45
31659 Golf MPC.....	43
34006 HardBall IV.....	32
32122 Harpoon II.....	41
34702 King's Quest Anthology CO.....	51
35326 King's Quest VII CD.....	49
36741 Lemmings Chronicles CD.....	36
34155 MechWarrior II CO.....	46
34658 Mortal Kombat/GamePad Bundle.....	46
33204 Myst CO.....	48
34085 Phantasmagoria CO.....	49
36818 Reader's Digest MPC Crosswords CO.....	21
31457 SimCity 2000.....	40
34246 SimCity 2000 WIN.....	15
35752 SimCity 2000: Great Oasisters WIN.....	15
22993 SimCity 2000: Hintbook.....	15
22085 Solitaire Antics WIN.....	18
34693 Space Quest Anthology CO.....	45
31656 Space Simulator.....	42
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36803 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Calendar CD.....	26
34568 Star Trek: TNG "A Final Unity" CO.....	55
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36893 Stonekeep CO.....	44
37283 Street Fighter Compilation CO.....	24
36819 TV Guide Crosswords CD.....	21
36819 TV Guide Mult. Crosswords CO.....	21
37565 Transport Tycoon CO.....	46
35816 Virtual Vegas Volume 1.....	19
34276 Wing Commander III CO.....	54
37687 World Series of Poker Deluxe CD.....	30
36940 X-Wing Collectors CO.....	46

LANGUAGES/ENVIRONMENTS


35281 MS-DOOS Upgrade 6.22.....	51
36989 OS/2 Warp 3.0 CO.....	77
36991 OS/2 Warp Upgrade 3.0.....	89
36994 OS/2 Warp w/ Win Support CO.....	118
35647 Windows '95.....	145
35648 Windows '95 Upgrade.....	78
34080 Windows 3.11.....	96
34081 Windows 3.11 Upgrade.....	53

DESIGN/PUBLISH

37534 Card Shop Plus Deluxe CO.....	37
37991 Card Shop Plus Deluxe WIN.....	32
36187 Clickbook WIN.....	43
34905 Corel Draw 5.0 MPC CD.....	451
34384 Corel Gallery CO.....	32
37294 Corel Photo-Paint Plus 5.0 CO.....	130
33036 Creative Writer WIN.....	43
37045 Fine Artist CO.....	43
33039 Fine Artist WIN.....	43
35749 Gift Maker WIN.....	35
33514 Microsoft Publisher 2.0 CO.....	89
31527 Microsoft Publisher 2.0 WIN.....	89
37468 Page Magic WIN.....	47
36717 PhotoWorks Plus w/FREE Camera.....	27
33923 Print Artist WIN.....	27
36030 Print Shop Deluxe 2.0 WIN.....	55
36031 Print Shop Deluxe Ensemble CO.....	73
36710 Stationary Store CO.....	41
36709 Stationary Store WIN.....	30
37987 Sticker Shop Plus.....	24
31050 Word 6.0 OOS.....	316
32876 Word 6.0 WIN.....	308
34604 Word Upgrade 6.0 DOS.....	119
32878 Word Upgrade 6.0 WIN.....	120
35190 WordPerfect 6.0 Upgrade WIN.....	93
32211 WordPerfect 6.0A WIN.....	321

FINANCE/ACCOUNTING


37386 Charles J. Givens Money Guide CO.....	29
36194 OacEasy Accounting 5.0.....	88
34117 OacEasy Accounting WIN.....	88
38057 JK Lasser '94 WIN.....	21



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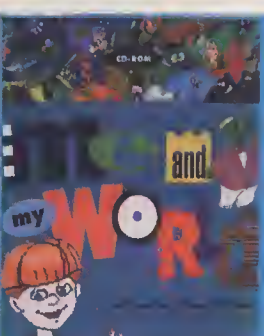
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FINANCE/REFERENCE

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38056 JK Lasser '94 WIN.....	21
38055 Kiplinger's Simply Money 2.0 WIN.....	30
36983 M.Y.O.B. Accounting 5 WIN.....	107
37662 Managing Your Money 2.0 WIN.....	33
34082 Money 3.0 WIN.....	26
35015 Peachtree Acct Deluxe 3.0 CO.....	108
32000 Quickbooks 2.0.....	98
36840 Quicken 4.0 WIN.....	42
36838 Quicken 8.0 OOS.....	42
36841 Quicken Deluxe 4.0 CO.....	57
37883 Simply Tax WIN.....	30
37413 Taxcut Final 1040 '94.....	30
37431 Taxcut Final 1040 '94 CD.....	30
37414 Taxcut Final 1040 '94 WIN.....	30
38031 TurboTax Federal '94 CD.....	43
38032 TurboTax Federal '94 DOS.....	37
38030 TurboTax Federal '94 WIN.....	37
38038 TurboTax State '94 DOS.....	25
38037 TurboTax State '94 WIN.....	25
38039 TurboTax Trial Version '94 DOS.....	11
38040 TurboTax Trial Version '94 WIN.....	11
38035 TurboTax/Quicken '94 WIN.....	58

REFERENCE

35390 AAA Trip Planner CO.....	37
31340 American Heritage Dictionary WIN.....	35
20422 Atlas Map 3.0 CO.....	46
32383 Atlas Map Ski Resorts WIN.....	24
34083 Bookshelf '94 IBM CO.....	64
37359 Cinemania Movie Guide 1995 CO.....	53
36855 Encarta Encyclopedia '95 MPC.....	89
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27680 Micro Kitchen GOLO WIN.....	30
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31807 Multimedia Stravinsky CO.....	53
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38066 Parent's Magazine Simply Kids WIN.....	30
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36110 Sharks1 CO.....	32
38067 Wedding Workshop.....	CALL
36354 Weekend Home Projects CD.....	33
36111 Wings Over Europe WW II CD.....	31

HEALTH

32110 Better Homes Health Cooking CO.....	36
34990 Deal a Meal CO.....	41
37576 Expert Diet WIN.....	12
37329 Healing Foods Cookbook CO.....	27
37348 Healthy Heart Cookbook WIN.....	21
37648 Kathy Smith's Fat Burning CD.....	26
33528 Mayo Clinic Family Health CD.....	33
34986 Mayo Clinic Family Pharmacist CO.....	35
36519 Mayo Clinic Sports Health CO.....	35

HARDWARE

JOYSTICKS/MICE

37036 AeroDuet 30 (Mouse and Pen).....	119
32883 Cyberman 30 Controller.....	43
37745 Oexxa 2 Button Serial Mouse.....	12
31417 Flight Stick Pro.....	55
33855 Gameport 2000 Up to 80MHz.....	26
36953 MouseMan Sensa 5 Serial (Green).....	53
35133 Phoenix Flight & Weapons.....	103
36876 Pro Pedals.....	75
30825 Thrustmaster ACM Game Card.....	27
38027 Thrustmaster FCS MK11.....	63
33344 Thrustmaster Formula T1.....	111
35104 Thrustmaster F-16 FLCs.....	112
29522 Thrustmaster Pro Flight Control.....	112
31258 Thrustmaster Weapon Mark II.....	101
36656 Wingman Extreme Joystick.....	43

PRINTERS

34228 BJ-105X Bubble Jet Printer.....	271
37976 Brother HL-660 Laser Printer.....	700
37978 Brother P-Touch Label Printer.....	224
37979 Brother TN-100HL Toner.....	28
35800 Epson Stylus Color Ink Jet.....	543

MEMORY/CPU UPGRADES

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SOUND CARDS

37753 Game Zapper.....	42
37032 PhoneBlaster.....	328
35480 Roland SCO-10 OB Sound Canvas.....	154
35628 Roland SCO-15 OB Sound Canvas.....	211
32533 Sound Blaster 16 MCO ASP.....	172
32531 Sound Blaster 16 SCSI-2.....	172
34807 Sound Blaster 16 Value Edition.....	93
37027 Sound Blaster AWE32 Value Ed.....	226
34661 Sound Blaster Pro Value Ed.....	74
34660 Sound Blaster Value Edition.....	52
30931 WaveBlaster.....	178

MODEMS/FAXES

31921 ACE 14.4 INT S/R-Fax W/Voice.....	208
33712 Connection 14.4 Int. Fax/Modem.....	77
37972 Scout Classic 14.4 Ext.....	84
28367 Sportster 14.4 Int. Fax/Modem.....	98
27993 Sportster 14.4 Ext. Fax/Modem.....	114
37599 Sportster 14.4 PCMCIA.....	184
37453 Sportster 28.8 V.34 Ext. Fax/Modem.....	224
37454 Sportster 28.8 V.34 Int. Fax/Modem.....	230

SPEAKERS

36500 Jazz J-590 Speakers.....	63
32228 Labtec CS-1000 Speakers.....	48
32101 Roland MA-12CP Powered Speakers.....	176
35371 Roland MA-20P Powered Speakers.....	162
36813 SBB 3-PC Computer Spk. Sys.....	100
37712 Vivid3D Pro.....	71
37416 Vivid3D Studio.....	57

CD DRIVES & UPGRADE KITS

37007 3DO Blaster.....	380
35856 4PLEX Quad-speed EXT w/ctrl.....	563
35855 4PLEX Quad-speed INT w/ctrl.....	498
38059 MultiSpin 3XP Plus Portable.....	402
35731 Aztech CDA268-01A INT w/Ctrl.....	129
36706 CO Upgrade Kit INT w/6 Microsoft.....	251
37031 Oiglat Schoolhouse INT CDROM.....	238
30216 Odiscovery CD 16 INT CDROM.....	427
37046 Edutainment CD16 INT CDROM.....	427
38060 MultiSpin 2V Deluxe INT CDROM.....	300
38062 MultiSpin 2V INT CDROM.....	179
38063 MultiSpin 3XP Plus EXT Kit.....	479
34923 MultiSpin 4XE EXT CDROM.....	503
38064 MultiSpin 4XE EXT CDROM Kit.....	580
38058 MultiSpin 4XI INT CDROM.....	402
38065 MultiSpin 4XI INT CDROM Kit.....	479
37028 Multimedia Office INT CO-ROM.....	534
37026 Omni 4X.....	415
31809 OmniCD Upgrade Kit.....	181
38071 Teac CD-55A Internal CO-RomKit.....	307



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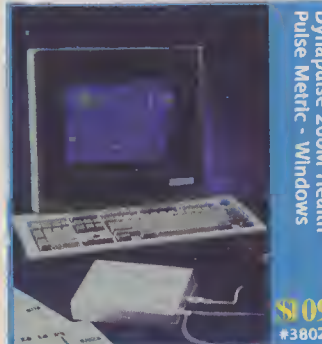
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Graphics programs, a
computer and a little
imagination let
children tell their
relatives and friends
how much they care.

And you'll love how
easy it is to help them.



5 *special* **valentines**

by carolyn jabs



When a child gives a homemade valentine to a favorite relative, teacher or friend, it sends a special message of affection. But how many parents these days have the time to help

ate valentines that are pretty and witty—and quick—all you and your child need is a graphics program and a little imagination.

To make a memorable valentine on your

your **kids can make**

their kids cut intricate heart and flower designs and then hand-letter lyrics of love?

Happily, the home PC is reviving the tradition of making personal valentines. To cre-

computer, start by flipping through the images in your graphics or clip-art program (see “Instant Art” on page 120). If, for example, a picture of a heart catches your child’s eye,

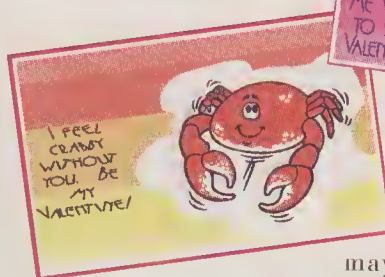
enlarge the image to fill an entire page. Valentines are meant to be fancy, so add some ribbons and a flowery border. Then insert a simple but sweet message like "Be mine!" using an ornate or old-fashioned type font. Your child may want to use the keyboard to add his or her name at the bottom, but gently suggest that signing the valentine by hand lends the right personal touch. Print your valentine on card stock, if your printer will accept it; use pink or red paper if you have a black-and-white printer.

A touch of class

In most schools, children celebrate Valentine's Day by giving a card to each member of the class. This year, instead of buying a box of valentines featuring the latest cartoon sensation, encourage your kids to create unique cards with a graphics program such as Print Artist (Maxis, 800-336-2947). To make a valentine with Print Artist, select the Sign section and choose the blank template. Click on Insert in the menu bar and select Basic Shapes. For a rectangular valentine that fits in a standard envelope, choose the Square frame, click on the border and drag it to approximately 5¼ by 3¼ inches. You can experiment with other shapes such as octagons, diamonds and circles, but you may have to fold them to fit in an envelope. After your child has picked a shape, arrange four on a page by selecting Edit, choosing Duplicate and positioning one shape in each quadrant.

School valentines are famous for their silly messages, which are often based on totally ridiculous puns—the bigger the groan they produce, the better. The pictures that come with Print Artist are a little too bland to make truly funny valentines. You'll get sillier results if you drop in wacky animal graphics from a program such as Crayola's Art Studio (Micrografx, 800-676-3110) or the animal clip-art packages available from Print Artist and Print Shop Deluxe (Broderbund Software, 800-521-6263). These cartoon animals just beg for the corny lines kids find so side-splitting: "I can't bear to be without you." "You are so deer to me." "Don't monkey around with me."

After your child selects a picture, help him or her size the image and position it inside one of the shapes. Then select Insert, choose Text and help your child compose a humorous caption. Again, you'll probably have to lend a



hand to size and center the words within the shape, at least the first time. If your child

is very young and requires continued assistance, you can create a sheet with four valentines and print it several times. An older child

may want to design a different

valentine for each classmate. Just be sure none of the humor is potentially hurtful; a chubby youngster will probably not appreciate a valentine with an elephant illustration.

Print the valentines, and let your kids cut them out. If you have a black-and-white printer, add color with markers or crayons.

Cartoon

animals

and lines

like 'I

can't bear

to be

without

you' are

big hits

with kids.

'Eye love ewe'

Another gimmick that makes for a fun valentine is a rebus, a puzzle in which pictures replace like-sounding syllables or entire words (such as "eye" for "I" or "bee" for "be"). This kind of valentine is most likely to appeal to older children who may feel self-conscious about the premise of Valentine's Day but enjoy deciphering codes.

To design a rebus, use a blank template in the Sign section of a program such as Print Artist. Scan the graphics for pictures that have double meanings, such as an image of sheep ("ewe" to replace "you"). Compose a short message; try writing it in verse if you're feeling particularly creative. Insert your graphics and reduce them to about 1½ inches square. Then drop in your text. You can use a different font for each typewritten word. When all the words

and pictures are in order, frame your rebus by going to Insert and choosing Border.

A picture-perfect valentine

Valentine's Day also is a good time to frame and distribute some of your child's school pictures that have been gathering dust at the bottom of your dresser drawer. It takes only a few minutes to create a fancy frame on your PC, but your handiwork can turn an ordinary photo into a keepsake for relatives and friends. Select the Sign section in your graphics program and call up a blank template. Choose Insert from the menu bar and browse through the Borders and Backgrounds features. In the Print Artist program, for example, border possibilities include Hearts (change the colors from blue and pink to pink and red) or Spanish Flowers (to make this one more lush, layer four copies of the border over each other, each one turned by 90 degrees). For a jazzy background, try Lips, Lips, Lips.

Position a single solid shape in the center of the template and enlarge it to the size of your photo. Add a simple line of text, such as "Sally loves Grandma." Print the frame on card stock. A young child can then paste his or her picture over the solid shape in the middle of the card. If an older child wants to give the card a more finished look, use a utility knife to cut around the shape in the center. Position the photo behind the hole and tape it in place. Attach a second piece of card stock to the back of the card. You can even run colored tape around all four



**Your
handiwork
can turn
an ordinary
photo into
a keepsake
for family
and
friends.**



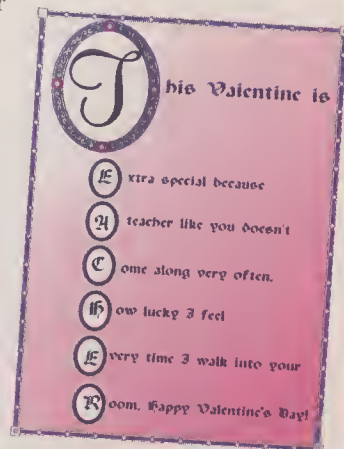
edges to hold the pieces together.

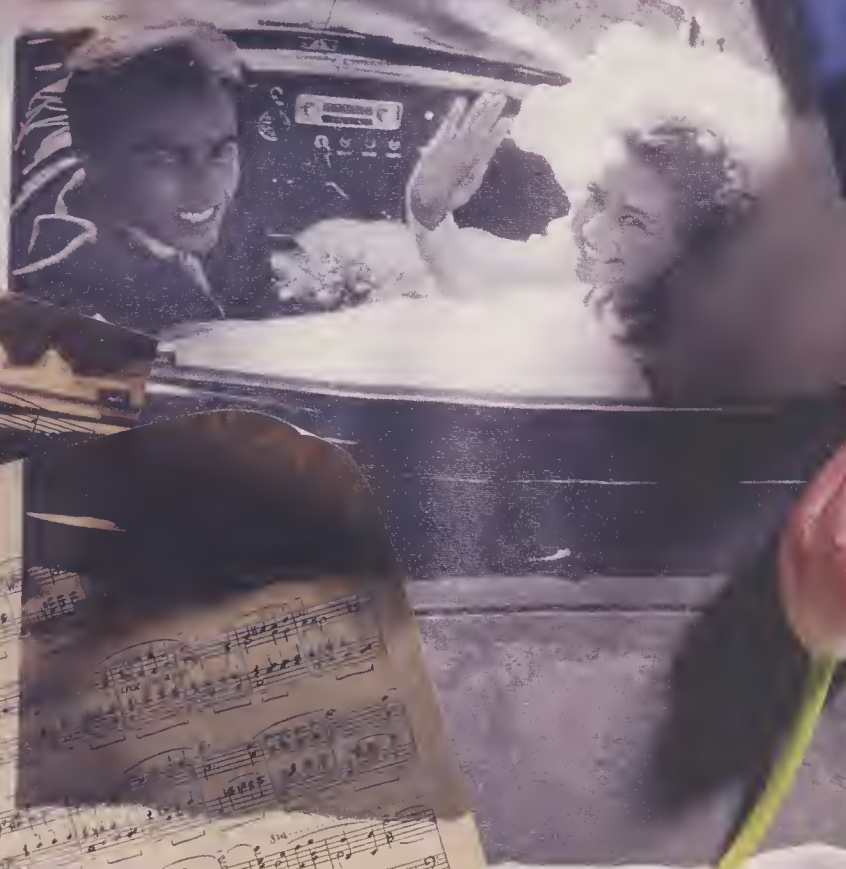
Another clever way for your child to express affection for relatives and friends is the acrostic valentine. An acrostic uses the letters of a person's name to start each line of text. When the acrostic is printed, the name pops out in capital letters down the left-hand side of the page. Most acrostics are written in rhyme, but it works just as well if your child simply lists things he or she likes about the person.

Print Shop Deluxe is especially good for creating acrostics because its Initial Caps graphics wrap around the letters. Start in the Sign section with a blank template. Select Object from the menu bar and click on Add. Choose Square Graphics and then click on Deluxe Square Graphics. Open the Initial Caps file and peruse the different designs. When you make your selection, go to the Edit menu and duplicate the graphic—one for each letter in the recipient's name. Arrange the graphics down the left-hand side of the page, and enlarge the top one to be about 25 percent bigger than the rest.

Choose a type style and enter the letters of the person's name, one at a time, inside each graphic. Then type the lines of text, omitting the first letter of each, and place them after the initial cap. A border adds a nice touch.

The part of this process you'll love the most is the time you spend with your child at the PC working on an acrostic, giggling over silly puns or trying to stump each other with the rebus clues. It's the best Valentine you could ever get. ♥





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- Miss Julie White
88 Scarlet Drive
Winston, CT 06452
- Mr. Richard Thomas
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288 Center Street
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989 Jukeberry Drive
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28 Citizens Road
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- Mr. Christopher Bea
96 Tremont Street
Milford, MA 8836
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four weddings

and a few nuptial planners

**Know someone
who's
setting the date?
The right
software ensures
the bride,
groom, guests,
flowers
and everything else
makes it
to the church on time**

by jenny c. mcune

Newlyweds Michael and Shannon Lauritzen love to relive their November wedding, which couldn't have been more perfect if it had come out of a storybook. Everything went off without a hitch, from the moment 21-year-old Shannon floated into view in her sequined satin gown to the time she and Michael, 26, waved

good-bye to their 80 guests following an elegant reception at Michael's parents' home in a Dallas suburb.

Romantics might rhapsodize about fate, and how when two people are meant for each other everything just naturally falls into place. But months of painstaking planning showed Shannon and Michael that once Cupid brings two people together, his job is done—he's not about to help them track their guest list or deal with caterers. When mat-



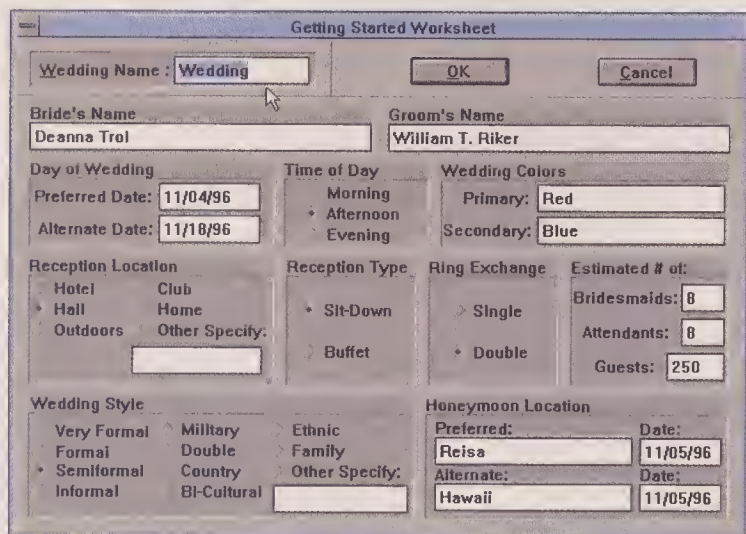
four weddings and a few nuptial planners

ters of the heart cross over to the more practical matters of the checkbook and checklists of wedding arrangements, the arrows you can count on are on the keyboard and screen of your home computer.

In essence, a wedding is the biggest, most complicated party most of us will ever throw. Coordinating the seemingly endless parade of details requires organization, and software such as Wedding Workshop, Smart-N-Easy Wedding Planner, The Wedding Planner and I Do, The Ultimate Wedding Planner is perfect for the task. The average bill for a wedding today is \$15,000, but whether you're planning an intimate reception for close family and friends or a 500-guest blowout that would make Donald and Marla Trump blush, these programs—which all cost less than \$50—will help provide peace of mind. And afterward, a wedding planner filled in with all the details of your special day will be a treasured keepsake.

A Workshop built for two

One of best things about using a wedding planner, says Shannon, a receptionist at an architectural firm outside Dallas, was that it made Michael an active partner in the pre-ceremony planning. In fact, it was his idea to use the software. As an international trader, Michael relies on a computer to track his business. Not long after he proposed to Shannon on New Year's Eve '93, he suggested they take advantage of the PC's organizational wizardry for their wedding preparations.



Getting Started Worksheet			
Wedding Name: <input type="text" value="Wedding"/>		<input type="button" value="OK"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	
Bride's Name <input type="text" value="Deanna Trol"/>		Groom's Name <input type="text" value="William T. Riker"/>	
Day of Wedding Preferred Date: <input type="text" value="11/04/96"/> Alternate Date: <input type="text" value="11/18/96"/>		Time of Day <input type="radio"/> Morning <input checked="" type="radio"/> Afternoon <input type="radio"/> Evening	
Reception Location <input type="radio"/> Hotel <input type="radio"/> Club <input type="radio"/> Hall <input type="radio"/> Home <input type="radio"/> Outdoors <input type="radio"/> Other Specify: <input type="text"/>		Wedding Colors Primary: <input type="text" value="Red"/> Secondary: <input type="text" value="Blue"/>	
Reception Type <input checked="" type="radio"/> Sit-Down <input type="radio"/> Buffet		Ring Exchange <input checked="" type="radio"/> Single <input type="radio"/> Double	
Wedding Style <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Formal <input type="radio"/> Military <input type="radio"/> Formal <input type="radio"/> Double <input type="radio"/> Semiformal <input type="radio"/> Country <input type="radio"/> Informal <input type="radio"/> BI-Cultural		Estimated # of: Bridesmaids: <input type="text" value="8"/> Attendants: <input type="text" value="8"/> Guests: <input type="text" value="250"/>	
Honeymoon Location Preferred: <input type="text" value="Reisa"/> Date: <input type="text" value="11/05/96"/> Alternate: <input type="text" value="Hawaii"/> Date: <input type="text" value="11/05/96"/>			

Answering a couple of important questions in the Wedding Workshop gets the prenuptial planning off to a flying start.

PICKING A DIAMOND

How do you find a special diamond engagement or wedding ring?



The Wedding Workshop program advises you to shop at a reputable jeweler, choose the diamond before you pick the setting and remember "the four C's":

- **Carat.** This is the diamond's weight.
- **Cut.** A well-cut diamond creates a more brilliant sparkle.
- **Color.** Diamonds range from faint yellow to very rare pinks, blues and greens. The best color? None at all.
- **Clarity.** Most diamonds have natural inclusions, or flaws, that can be seen by the naked eye or become visible under magnification. The fewer and smaller the imperfections are, the less they interfere with the passage of light through the stone and the clearer and more beautiful the diamond.

Shannon and Michael discovered the Wedding Workshop program, which quickly became a valuable bridal consultant and organizer. Clicking on an entwined heart icon brought the couple to the Wedding Workshop section, where they created their guest list, tracked the responses to their invitations, noted which guests were bringing dates and recorded gifts received from friends and family members.

The pair also found the budget features in this section to be right on the money. They drew up a spending plan, recorded expenses, tracked due dates for balance payments and compared cost estimates. It showed them that the \$550 three-tier French vanilla wedding cake from one bakery would be a little too rich for their budget, but the \$156 cake from another bake shop would be just right.

Wedding Workshop's To-Do Editor was another big help to Shannon and Michael. Here, they typed in a task—send invitations, review menu, reserve limos—assigned a due

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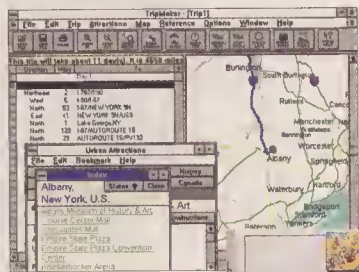
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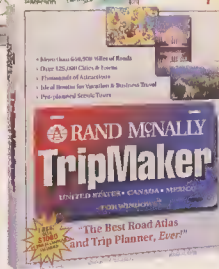
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Your Price: \$59.95

(plus \$7.50 shipping and handling)



System Requirements: Microsoft® Windows™ 3.1 or higher, EGA, VGA, or higher graphics card. DOS 3.3 or higher; 80386 or higher PC recommended. 4 MB RAM or more. 3 1/2" disk version: 11 MB or more of hard disk space. CD version: Double-speed CD-ROM drive and 1 MB of hard disk space.

"Finally a developer has created a travel planning program with real depth. Rand McNally TripMaker will be the clear category winner."

—Soft•letter 8/94



RAND McNALLY

four weddings and a few nuptial planners

date and identified who was responsible for getting the job done.

Whenever they wanted to see their progress at a glance—from how many guests had responded to their invitations to how much money remained in the budget—they could call up a report on screen or make a printout. After the couple returned from their honeymoon in Cozumel, Mexico, they used the program to create a list of people to whom they owed thank-you notes.

Wedding Workshop also contains a Notebook section, which provides space to jot down your thoughts as your plans take shape.

And if you want to use calligraphy to address your own wedding invitation envelopes in style, Wedding Workshop offers 56 fonts. In most wedding planners, you have to move your guest list into another program, generally a word processor or database with its own fonts or a special font package, and print from there. Of course, to create invitation mailings you need a quality ink jet or laser printer that can handle the envelopes.

Smart-N-Easy says 'I DOS'

Time is precious to Kristeen Wilwol and Gary Roberts. She works as a pediatric nurse at Miami Children's Hospital while studying for a combined bachelor's and master's degree in health care. Gary, 34, is a salesman at a scuba diving equipment store. Both work 12-hour shifts—but not always the same 12 hours—which makes finding time to sit down together and plan their October '95 wedding a challenge. They're depending on the Smart-N-Easy Wedding Planner to make the most of the hours they can spend hammering out the details. "Managing to see each other is difficult enough," says 28-year-old Kristeen. "When we're not too tired, we use the computer to work on our wedding."

Smart-N-Easy is a good choice for DOS fans who don't expect to see any pretty icons—the arrow and Enter keys take you through the text-based program. But that doesn't mean it lacks special touches: When you open the program, assuming you have a sound card, you hear the opening chords of "Here Comes the Bride."

The program's main menu lists nine sections: Guest Manager, Expense Manager, Appointments, Planning Guide, Bride and

GUEST MAINTENANCE			
Title [Mr.]	First Name [Peter]	Last [Sosa]	
Address 1 [9966 Robinson Street]			
Address 2 []			
City [Flushing]	State [NY]	Zip Code [11358]	
Phone Number [(718) 555-3210]			
Responded [Y]	Attending [Y]	No. Of Persons [4]	Table [2]
Hotel Required [Y]		No. Rooms [0]	Wedding Gift [1000.00]
Attended Shower [N]		Shower Gift []	
Comments [SON DAVID IS RING BEARER]			[]
[]			[]

(A)dd, (D)elete, (E)dit, (N)ext, (P)rior, (S)earch, (T)op, (B)ottom, (L)ist, (Q)uit

In Smart-N-Easy, guest worksheets help the busy bride and groom track information about friends and relatives.

Groom Journals, Shopping List, Gifts, Tips and Suggestions, and For Keep Sake. In Guest Manager, for instance, you can keep a dossier on each guest—for example, whether he or she is a friend of the bride or the groom, and whether a hotel reservation is necessary. Each record includes a two-line area for special comments, such as "Seat Grandmother Lucie far from the band." You can look at the information in a number of ways, including guests by table, out-of-town guests and overall summary.

The Expense Manager section shows you just where your money goes: Enter each expense and note what it's for, whom you pay, the due date, any money paid thus far and balance due. Although there's a place for every detail, there's no list of typical expenses, so you have to remember to start an entry for

WHY STAND ON CEREMONY?

One of the best things about weddings in the '90s is the freedom to put your own stamp on the day, says The Wedding Planner. It's no faux pas to plan an intimate ceremony and reception rather than a large formal wedding. Sit down with your betrothed and think about all the weddings you've attended. Discuss what you liked or disliked about them. Then plan your special day to reflect your taste.



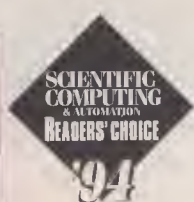
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as a slight wrist movement, a boon to those suffering from the tedious rolling strain of relative rodents! Use the included **Tablet Control Panel** to customize the button options in any combination of functions, left click, right click, left double click, left-drag, etc. Unlike mice or trackballs, you can use the CAT on your desk, off your desk, standing making a presentation or comfortably reclining in your chair. Work the way you prefer, with ease and spontaneity.



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*William H. Gates III
Chairman / CEO Microsoft Corp.
Computer Paper, May '92*

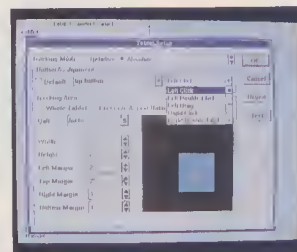
"A mouse is wonderful for selecting a pull-down menu item, but when you need precise control . . . you should give up rodents and check out a cat — an ACECAT graphics tablet from ACECAD."

*Paul Bonner
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four weddings and a few nuptial planners

say, florist or band. Here, too, you can print a variety of reports.

Linda Kepfinger, now a home-maker and part-time office manager in Paterson, N.J., used Smart-N-Easy's Planning Guide when she organized her wedding five years ago. "The Planning Guide helped me keep on top of when I should be doing what," Linda, 31, says. "For instance, it told me when I should order my wedding invitations and start looking for my gown."

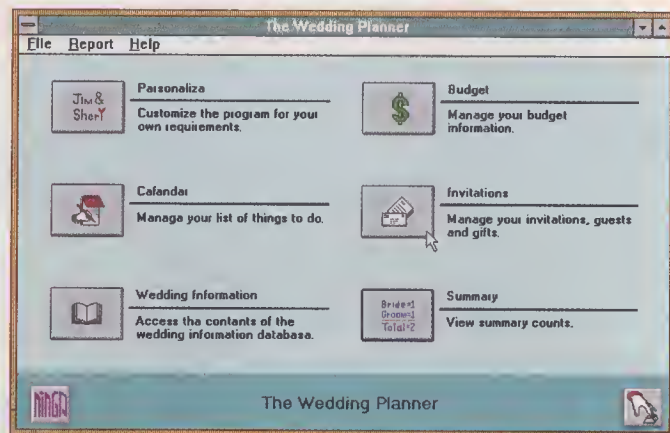
In the years since Linda and her husband tied the knot, the program has been updated and enhanced. The current version includes a section for recording memorable events—say, the day of the bachelor party or bridal shower—journal areas for the bride and groom and a honeymoon planner with packing and traveling tips. And Smart-N-Easy is now packaged with a free copy of the Home Inventory Manager software, which helps you document your household possessions. This comes in handy when buying insurance for your new home or apartment (for more on home inventory software, see Financial Adviser in the December 1994 issue of *HomePC*).

Wedding Planner fits glass slipper

Connie Bussey met Scott Nye eight years ago when they served on their high school's student council. "I thought he was a real geek," recalls Connie, 22, a fitness instructor at a health club in Calgary, Alberta. "But then we started talking and ended up the best of friends." The friendship blossomed into a romance, and last April, Scott, 25, proposed. The wedding is scheduled for this coming July. "Our theme is Cinderella, and we're planning a traditional wedding," Connie says.

To help the couple along, Scott's brother gave them a copy of *The Wedding Planner* for DOS. Scott, a financial analyst for the local phone company, loved the idea of using his computer and a program designed specifically for weddings. He and Connie are committed Windows users, however, so they quickly traded in the DOS version for *The Wedding Planner* for Windows.

The *Wedding Planner* is organized into six sections: Personalize, Calendar, Wedding Information, Budget, Invitations and Summary. Click on the Calendar icon—a hand scribbling on a spiral-bound notepad—and up pops a



The six sections of *The Wedding Planner* for Windows help ensure that all arrangements are right on the button.

schedule that outlines what needs to be done and when. For instance, for events that are "six months to a year ahead," the program asks you to select date and time, determine wedding music and make catering arrangements. Most important, the list of things to do on your wedding day reminds you to "take a deep breath and enjoy yourself."

The *Wedding Information* section is Connie's favorite part of the program. "I always come across something I need to know in there," she marvels. For instance, "it's given me pointers on how to write thank-you notes" (specifically mention the gift and say something nice about it).

Another helpful feature is the summary box of invitations, gifts, guests and budget, which quickly lets you know if your wedding plans are on track. If you want to check your

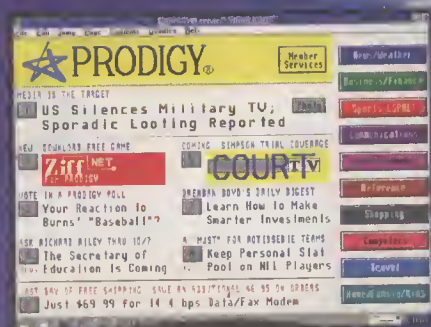
RECEPTIONS GO BY IN A FLASH, SO ENJOY!

When making a schedule for your wedding

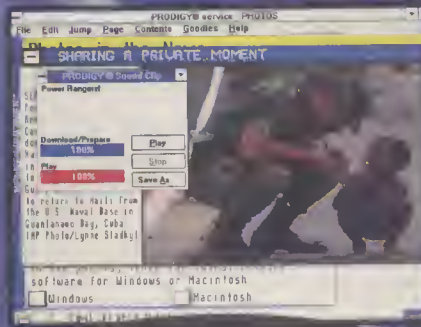
day, the *Smart-N-Easy Wedding Planner* suggests that you allow enough time for photo sessions after the ceremony and before the reception. This enables the bride, groom, family members and attendants to enjoy the party without interruption for more picture-taking.



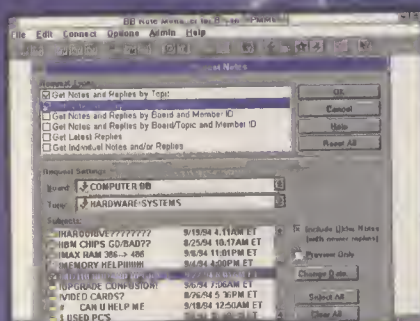
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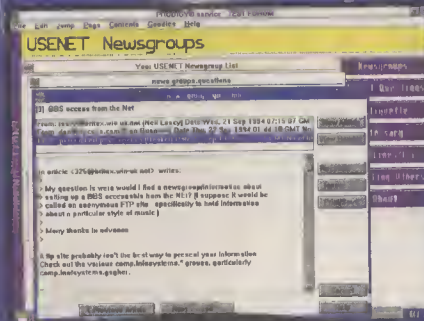
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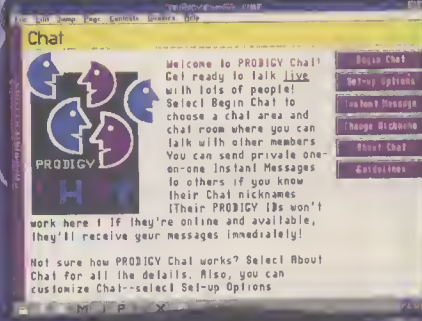
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four weddings and a few nuptial planners

latest confirmed guest count, for instance, you can quickly look at the number of people you've invited to the chapel, how many are attending the reception and how many are coming to the rehearsal dinner.

Jittery? Just do as I Do

Paul Hayashi, a wedding photographer in a small town 20 miles from Honolulu, often hears engaged couples talk about how hard it is to plan a wedding. Now when his clients complain, he tells them about I Do, The Ultimate Wedding Planner.

Paul raves about I Do's seating-arrangement feature. "In Hawaii," Paul explains, "we traditionally have formal evening weddings and deciding who will sit where is time-consuming. This program does it all for you."

Click on two ribboned wedding bells to get to My Wedding, the main portion of I Do, which holds your data about guest lists, budgets and so forth. Fill in the date of your wedding and other particulars—the names of the bride, groom and attendants, where the wedding will be held, what type of wedding it will be and so on—and hit the AutoTasker button. I Do automatically builds a customized list of what you need to do by a particular date. Most wedding planners just give you a general schedule, such as "within six months." The Ceremony, Reception and Honeymoon sections provide specific hints and worksheets for planning these events.

Using your computer and a good software package takes much of the angst out of wedding planning. And, unlike parents or future in-laws, a wedding planner package never argues with you about your choice of music



THEY'RE PLAYING OUR SONG

Your first dance as
husband and wife is

one of the day's most special moments. If you're hunting for the right song to express your feelings, consider one of these suggestions from I Do, The Ultimate Wedding Planner:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Aladdin's Theme
<i>Peabo Bryson and
Regina Bell</i> | • Just the Way
You Are
<i>Billy Joel</i> |
| • All My Life
<i>Linda Ronstadt
and Aaron Neville</i> | • Lady in Red
<i>Chris DeBurgh</i> |
| • Have I Told
You Lately
<i>Rod Stewart</i> | • Songbird
<i>Kenny G</i> |
| • Here and Now
<i>Luther Vandross</i> | • Unchained
Melody
<i>Righteous
Brothers</i> |
| • I Will Always
Love You
<i>Whitney Houston</i> | • Wonderful
Tonight
<i>Eric Clapton</i> |

or flowers. It lets you save your energy for more important things...like enjoying some of the most precious moments of your life. •

Jenny C. McCune is a writer based in Brooklyn, N.Y.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the wedding planner software mentioned in this article.

I Do, The Ultimate Wedding Planner

TouchSoft, (800) 887-8960,
(408) 956-0884
\$34.95 (Windows)

Smart-N-Easy Wedding Planner

Automated Systems, (800) 555-6972,
(201) 812-1428
\$29.95 (DOS)

The Wedding Planner

Ninga Software, (800) 656-4642,
(403) 383-2772
\$49.95 (DOS, Windows)

Wedding Workshop

MicroPrecision Software,
(800) 688-9337, (408) 358-8250
\$39.95 (Windows)
\$49.95 (Macintosh)

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.



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what buyers need to know

devices.

*Here's how
they work,
and what to
look for when
you shop.*

by daniel grotta and sally wiener grotta

When we adopted Cuddles, an English springer spaniel puppy, we couldn't wait to tell our relatives and friends all about him. We sat down at the PC and wrote a note describing how much Cuddles loves chewing his squeaky toys, chasing squirrels in the park and stealing blankets from the bed. But we couldn't quite capture Cuddles' adorable personality in words. So we placed a color

photograph of our puppy on the scanner to get the image into the computer, dropped his cute little face right smack in the center of the letter and pumped out several dozen copies on a color ink jet printer.

A few years ago, the only way Cuddles would have made the rounds this way is if he had been adopted by a graphics professional or large corporation. Scanners were expensive, hard-to-use specialty items for business, but that's all changed. Home computer owners are lining up for the devices, which contain a chip that reads photos, drawings, type and almost any other two-dimensional—and sometimes three-dimensional—object and then converts the image into digital data a computer can use. Scanning an image into the computer takes anywhere from a few seconds for a snapshot-sized, low-resolution black-and-white line drawing to 15 minutes or more for a detailed, 8½-by-14-inch color photo.

Inserting photos into letters, greeting cards and newsletters barely scratches the surface of ways you can use a scanner. How about creating artwork composites or collages? Are you tempted to add that recipe from the back of the pasta box to your computer cookbook? Instead of typing it, run it through the scanner. A

**A scanner
chip reads
photos, type
and drawings
and converts
the image
into digital
data a
computer
can use.**

friend of ours scans his receipts into his computer for easy reference, just in case the IRS comes calling. If you have a home business, you can copy your signature or logo into the computer or scan data into your spreadsheet or database program.

Scanners for PCs and the Macintosh come in



Handheld models work best for small originals.

Scanning *the field*: a sampling of what *you'll see* as you shop

handheld models

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Thunderware
(510) 254-6581

ScanMagic 256
\$120

Mustek
(800) 468-7835
(714) 250-8855

Scanman Color
\$379

Logitech
(800) 231-7717
(510) 795-8500

A 256-grayscale scanner that delivers resolution up to 800 dpi (with software). The ViewScan model also allows you to restore image data that's lost when you scan too quickly.

This 24-bit color scanner provides 800-dpi resolution (with software) and crisp images at lower resolutions. It includes OCR software, an image editor and a slide-show utility.

KYE's 24-bit color scanner provides resolution up to 800 dpi (with software). It comes with OCR and image editing software. An LED and built-in speaker warn you when you're scanning too quickly.

The 256-grayscale scanner has a maximum optical resolution of 400 dpi. It includes a handy plastic clip-on guide that helps you scan straight across an image, OCR software and an image editor.

One of the best things about the ScanMagic 256 is its frequently discounted retail price. The grayscale scanner offers 400-dpi optical resolution and comes with OCR software and an image editor.

A 24-bit color scanner with 400-dpi optical resolution, the Scanman Color includes a test utility to ease installation, a visual indicator (through software) that keeps you from scanning too fast, OCR software and an image editor.

sheetfed models

ScanMan PowerPage
\$499

Logitech
(800) 231-7717
(510) 795-8500

ScanPlus Color 6000
\$399

Plustek
(800) 685-8088
(408) 745-7111

Features include optical resolution of 400 dpi and a parallel port connection. The 256-grayscale scanner lets you run a control-center program at all times—it pops up as soon as you load a sheet of paper. The unit includes OCR software and an image editor, plus fax and copying capabilities.

Barely bigger than a notebook computer, this 24-bit color scanner provides 600-dpi optical resolution. It comes with OCR software and an image editor. It's easy to use, but you have to install an SCSI board on your PC.

three basic types—handheld, sheetfed and flatbed. Each group includes color scanners, which reproduce color or black-and-white originals, and grayscale scanners, which can copy any original, but only in black and white or shades of gray. (For a snapshot of leading scanners, see the chart below.)

• **Handheld.** This is your least expensive choice—you can buy a grayscale handheld scanner for as little as \$100; a color model costs only slightly more—but it requires a steady hand. You slowly—*very* slowly—move the scanner over the art or type you want to copy. If you move too quickly or your hand is unsteady, you can lose data or wind up with an imperfect image.

Handheld scanners work best when you're copying small originals or narrow blocks of text. Scanning large objects is tricky because most handheld models can't exceed a 4-inch-wide area; to do a wider job, you must copy one 4-inch section at a time. Most handhelds include software that lets you stitch together two or more scans to produce a full-sized image.

• **Sheetfed.** You don't have to worry about jittery hands when you use a sheetfed scanner. Simply feed originals one at a time into a motor-driven slot that pulls them through the



machine, much like a fax. These higher-priced devices—sold in stores for \$300 to \$400—also let you scan in an 8-by-10-inch photo or a letter-sized page in one shot. But you can't scan in 3-D objects, and if you want to scan a page



Sheetfed scanners work much like a fax, pulling the original through a feeder into the machine.

from a book, you'll have to tear it out first.

• **Flatbed.** A flatbed scanner is the most versatile—and, typically, the most expensive, with prices starting at around \$500 in stores. A flatbed resembles a small photocopier: You lift the cover and place your original on a

flatbed models

Canon IX-3010
\$569

Canon
(800) 848-4123
(714) 438-3000

This 256-grayscale scanner delivers 300-dpi optical resolution and 1,200-dpi software resolution. It includes extensive tools for OCR and document management, as well as a utility that, when used with a printer, turns the scanner into a photocopier. You also get an image editor and a two-year Instant Exchange policy.

Canon IX-4015
\$969

Canon
(800) 848-4123
(714) 438-3000

Canon's 24-bit color scanner delivers high-quality reproduction of photos and artwork with the push of a button. The unit features optical resolution of 400 by 800 dpi and maximum software resolution of 1,200 dpi. The scanner also offers an OCR program.

ScanJet IIcx
\$1,179

Hewlett-Packard
(800) 722-6538
(415) 857-1501

With optical resolution of 400 dpi and software resolution of 1,600 dpi, Hewlett-Packard's easy-to-use 24-bit color scanner produces high-quality images. The unit is sold with an OCR program, image editing software and a photocopier conversion utility.

ScanJet 3p
\$599

Hewlett-Packard
(800) 722-6538
(415) 857-1501

This 256-grayscale scanner has 300-dpi optical and 1,200-dpi software resolution. It includes OCR software, a basic image editing program and a photocopier conversion utility. Options include a document feeder and a stand that lets you place the scanner on your printer.

ScanMaker II
\$749

Microtek
(800) 654-4160
(310) 297-5000

A 24-bit color scanner often discounted in stores, this model has 300-by-600-dpi optical resolution and 1,200-dpi software resolution. It comes with OCR and image editing software, and you can add a document feeder and transparency module.

ScanMaker IIg
\$549

Microtek
(800) 654-4160
(310) 297-5000

This 256-grayscale scanner delivers 300-by-600-dpi optical resolution and 1,200-dpi software resolution. Bundled with OCR and image editing software, it can be equipped with a document feeder.

Umax UC630LE
\$699

Umax
(800) 562-0311
(510) 651-9488

Umax's 24-bit color scanner has 300-by-600 dpi optical resolution and 1,200-dpi software resolution. It delivers accurate and vivid colors, and includes an OCR package and an image editor. You can add a document feeder or a transparency adapter.

All scanners listed in this chart are TWAIN-compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

glass plate. Flatbeds can scan 2-D originals sometimes as large as 8½ by 14 inches in a single pass. They can also handle 3-D objects up to about ¼-inch thick, such as loose change or a watch.

By adding a document feeder (\$100 to \$350), you can automatically scan several pages—typically, about 50 sheets—at once. This is a joy if you work at home with many forms of the same size. Transparency modules (\$350 to \$500) help you organize your photo collection by letting you scan in slides or negatives as large as 8 by 10 inches, but they do a poor job with 35-millimeter slides and negatives because the images are too small for the scanners to pick up sufficient detail. (Photographers or artists who plan to scan a lot of slides or negatives should consider a film scanner. These specialized devices can cost as much as \$18,000, but some simpler units, such as the Nikon CoolScan and the Tamron Fotovix III, are priced around \$1,000.)

Feature presentations

Once you decide which type of scanner to buy, your next mission is to figure out which features you need. Consider the following, all of which will affect the quality of your images.

- **Grayscale and color.** If you choose a grayscale scanner, make sure it handles 256 shades of gray. Some of the less expensive models can scan only 16 or 64 shades, which will

Don't let anyone talk you into buying a 30- or 36-bit color flatbed scanner; for most home users, the extra bits don't pay off.

limit the degree of detail in your images.

If you choose color, look for a 24-bit scanner, which works with 16.7 million colors and can realistically capture continuous-tone originals such as color photos. Less expensive 8-bit color handheld scanners offer only 256 colors: their scans look flat, somewhat like poster art. A 16-bit scanner offers 65,000 colors, still nowhere near the standards of 24-bit units. Don't let anyone talk you into buying a 30- or



Flatbed scanners are the most versatile models, handling 3-D objects up to ¼-inch thick.

36-bit color flatbed scanner, which costs more; the extra bits are useless unless you plan to use the scanner professionally (say, for preparing images to go to a printing press).

- **One-pass vs. three-pass.** For a scanner to recognize color, images must pass through

Getting the *best image* without stalling your hard drive

To produce attractive printouts of scanned photographs, paintings or line art, your scanning software needs two essential pieces of information: image size and printing resolution.

First, select the image size you want—say, 4 by 5 inches or 8 by 10 inches. Second, indicate the printing resolution, which determines the scanning resolution.

The printing resolution number varies depending on how fine an image you need. If you must have the highest quality—perhaps

you want to enlarge and retouch a photo of your family to hang at your upcoming reunion—use the printer's maximum resolution. This ranges from 300 dots per inch (dpi) to 600 dpi or even higher; check your printer's manual to see its top resolution.

But wouldn't you always want the maximum resolution? Not necessarily; the setting has drawbacks. Say you're scanning an 8-by-10-inch color photo at maximum printing resolution; the resulting image file can take up 20 megabytes (MB) or

more on your hard disk. Unless your computer has 16 MB of RAM or more, you can start scanning the image with your morning coffee—and you'll see your printout sometime after lunch.

Happily, there's an easy way to get a quality scan of your photo or artwork that's good enough to use in newsletters, reports or greeting cards without eating up tons of hard disk space or memory. Just set the printing resolution to 150 dpi rather than the maximum setting. —D.G. and S.W.G.

the unit's red, green and blue filters. If you're shopping for a color flatbed scanner, you may notice that the display cards at the store for some models proclaim that the scanner makes three separate passes (one for each primary color) over an object, while other models say they do everything in a single pass. Which offers higher-quality scans? There's no significant difference.

• **Resolution.** This refers to the level of detail a scanner captures, and it's one of the most important measures of a unit's quality; the higher the number of dots per inch (dpi), the better the machine. But the numbers can be deceiving because there are two measures of resolution: optical and interpolated.

Optical, or hardware, resolution is the truer measure of how much detail a scanner can reproduce. Look for a grayscale scanner with an optical resolution of at least 300 by 300 dpi. If you're buying a color scanner, choose one with a minimum optical resolution of 400 by 400 dpi or even 300 by 600 dpi.

Interpolated, or software, resolution boosts the numbers as high as 4,800 dpi. When it works well, interpolation significantly sharpens an image, but in many cases it won't appreciably improve an image's overall quality.

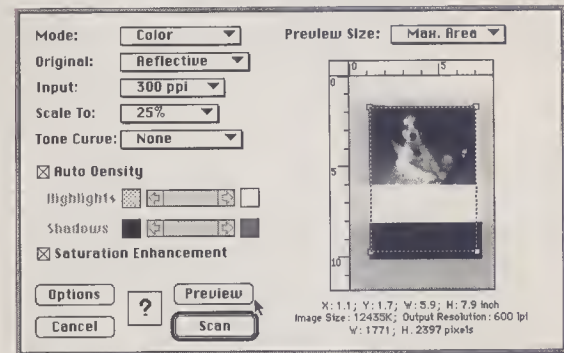
• **Software.** Most scanners come with all the basic software necessary to copy originals into a computer, and they are often packaged with more advanced programs as well. If you'll be scanning text most of the time, choose a scanner that comes with optical character recognition (OCR) software. When you scan in a page of type, the scanner treats it as a graphic image until you run the OCR program, which translates the image into words that you can then edit in your word processor, spreadsheet or database. Some popular OCR packages include Caere's OmniPage Direct,

Calera's WordScan and Xerox's TextBridge.

If you plan to work mostly with photos or illustrations, look for a scanner that includes image editing software such as Adobe's Photoshop or Micrografx's Picture Publisher. These programs are the computer equivalent of a drawing board, darkroom and retouching stand—they allow you to edit or enhance artwork right on the screen.

• **Speed.** Typically, the more expensive the scanner, the faster it works. But in most cases the difference per scan is only a few seconds, so unless you plan to handle a bunch of high-resolution prints or photographs, you won't save much time.

• **TWAIN.** Be sure to choose a scanner that is TWAIN-compatible. TWAIN—which, believe it or not, stands for Technology Without An Interesting Name—is a hardware and soft-



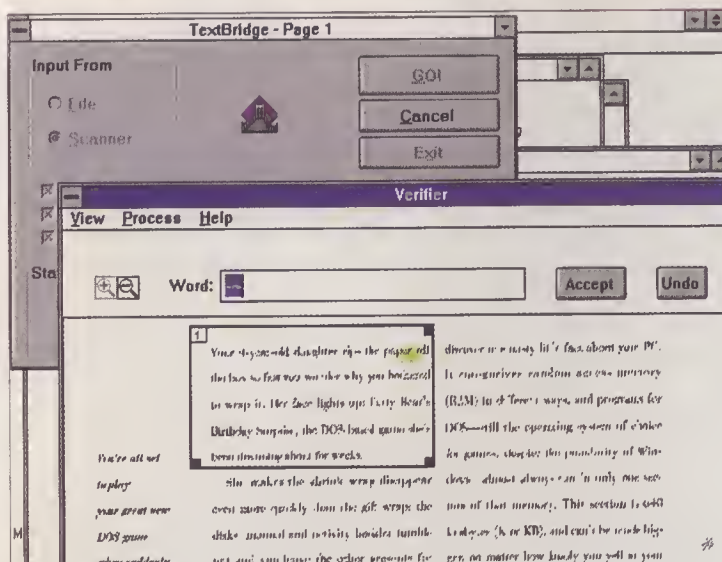
Of course, we have to show you Cuddles...

ware standard that allows you to scan an image directly into your word processing or desktop publishing file.

But more important, TWAIN simplifies scanner software installation on a PC. Most scanners attach to computers through a Small Computer System Interface (SCSI) port. SCSI is built into most Macs, so you simply plug the scanner into the computer, pop in the included diskette and click on the Setup folder. Unfortunately, most PCs don't include an SCSI port, so you have to install a separate SCSI board. The good news is that the board is usually sold with the scanner and is easy to set up. Some handheld and sheetfed scanners conveniently connect to your computer's parallel port, just like a printer.

Once you get your scanner up and running, use it to add adorable dog photos to your family newsletter, computerize your health insurance records or store a new recipe for penne à la vodka—we bet you're bound to find new uses for it every day. •

Daniel Grotta and Sally Wiener Grotta are imaging technology consultants and the authors of Digital Imaging for Visual Artists (Windcrest/McGraw-Hill).

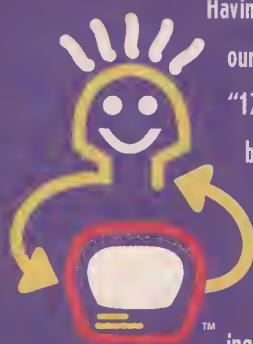


OCR software converts type from the page into text you can edit.



When learning's this much

Introducing entertainment software that actually teaches kids



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fun, who needs television?

something along the way.

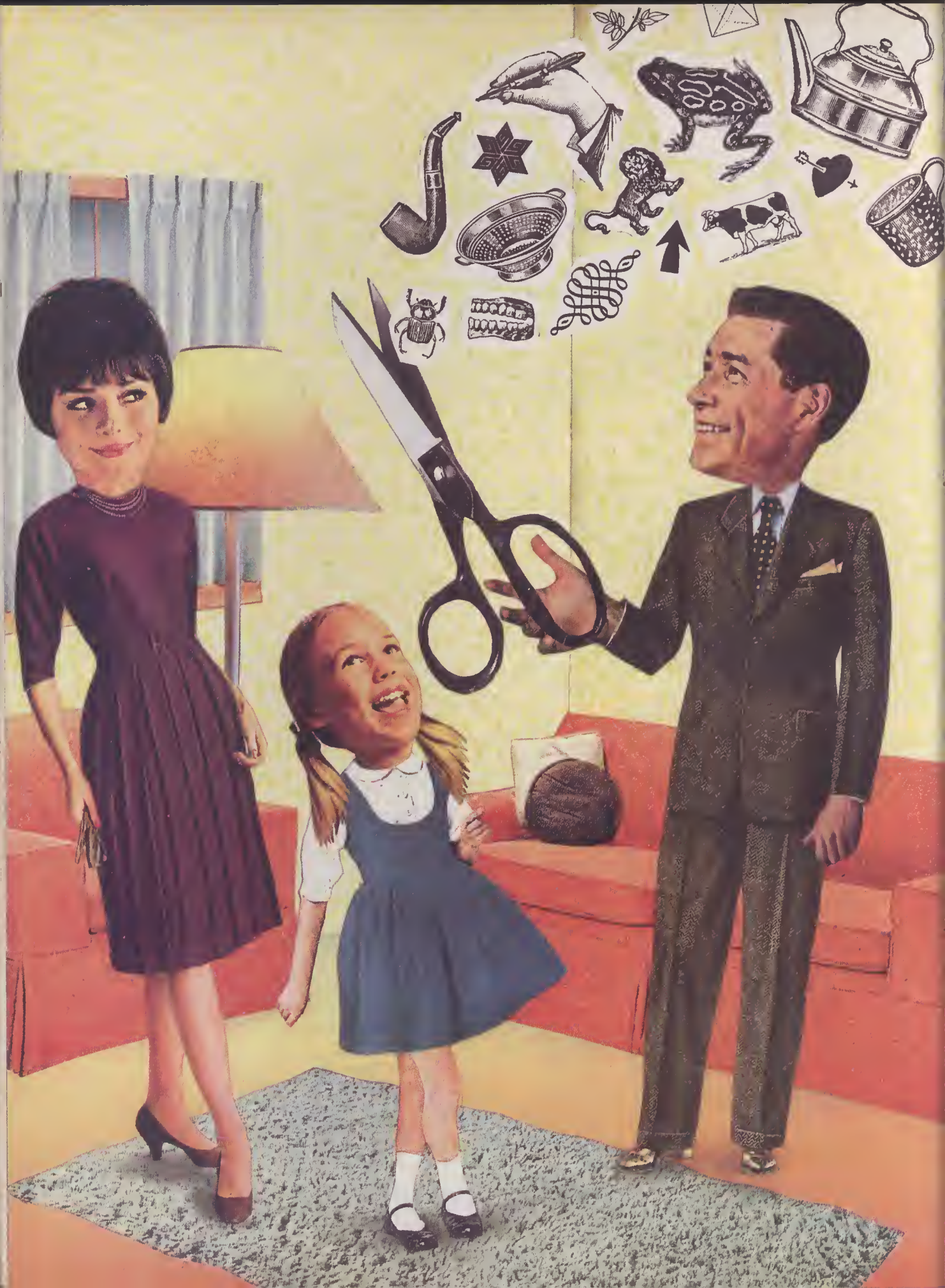
discover and learn at their own pace (which, any parent will tell you, can approach the speed of light).

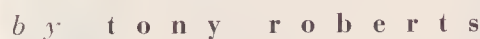
To purchase a toy that will never grow old, visit the software retailer nearest you. Or, order directly from GTE by calling 1800 GTE TODAY. Customer representatives will be happy to answer any questions or send you a brief video* on the products. Of course, no video can compare to an interactive disk, but that's the whole point, isn't it?



interactive
TOYS







dull documents? *just add*
Instant Art

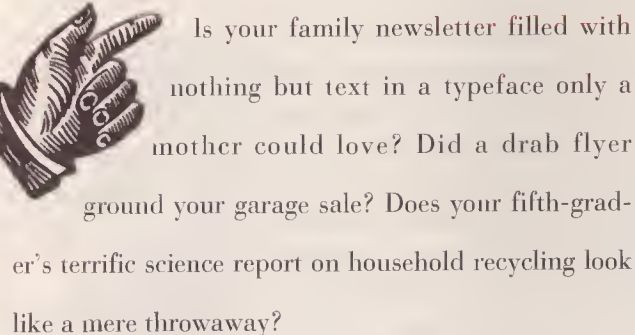


Illustration by Victoria Kann

February 1995 HOMEPC 121

Instant Art

Going 'green'

Images of recycling, pollution, raging forest fires, acid rain, endangered species, landscapes, symbols, and life on Earth now and in the future fill **Arroglyphs Environment 1**, a package of stunning pictures designed to promote ecological awareness. The 200 black-and-white EPS images

range in style from engravings to woodcuts to stamps to fine brush strokes; 92 of them are repeated in color.

\$149 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh) from Arro, (800) 243-1515, (201) 746-9620.



Wacky woodcuts

You'll look for any excuse to use the offbeat black-and-white images in **ArtJam Volume 30**. But given its wide range of categories—including Banners, Critters, Edibles, Hardware Store, Yard Sale, Making Faces, Home and Office, and Going Places—you won't have to look too hard. From aardvarks to the yin-yang symbol, the 350 woodcut-style EPS pictures are drawn in bold strokes that demand attention.

\$99 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh) from Image Club, (800) 661-9410, (403) 262-8008.



Celebrating good times

Writing a letter about your family's dude-ranch vacation? Inviting friends to a potluck supper? Creating flyers for the school band's fundraiser? Whenever you design materials for special events or family get-togethers, let the beautifully hand-drawn pictures, borders, headlines and backdrops in **Art à la Carte: Out & About** help you capture all the activity's fun and good feelings. The 150 color and black-and-white images are saved in EPS, WMF and CGM formats, and they look great in any size.

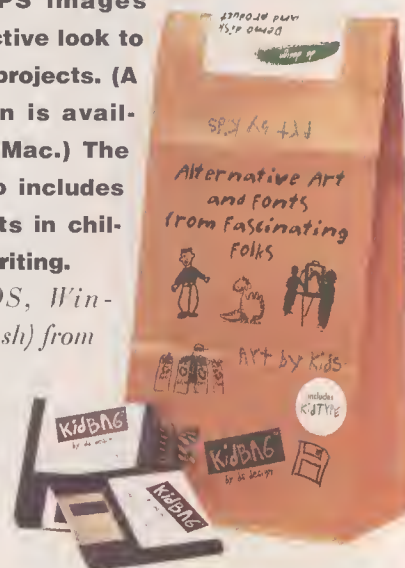
\$25 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh; floppy disk or CD-ROM) from 3G Graphics, (800) 456-0234, (206) 774-3518.



Kids' stuff

You won't pull a peanut butter and jelly sandwich from the brown paper **KidBag**, but you will find reproductions of 130 pencil, crayon and marker drawings created by children. From smiling sunrises to those familiar stick people, the program's black-and-white TIFF and EPS images give a distinctive look to kid-oriented projects. (A color version is available for the Mac.) The package also includes **KidType**, fonts in children's handwriting.

\$99.95 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh) from DS Designs, (800) 745-4037, (919) 319-1770.



Do You Make These Six Common Mistakes On Your Taxes?

Six common mistakes can cause you big headaches on your taxes. An oversight here, an omission there. From unnecessary tax payments to full blown IRS audits—you can end up paying too much ... or worse. But now, using TurboTax® or MacInTax®, you can avoid these simple but costly mistakes:

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2 The Transcription Error
With all those numbers being juggled from schedule to schedule, it's no wonder the figures are so often transcribed incorrectly or entered on the wrong line.

3 The Omitted Form
Even "ordinary" returns require anywhere from six to a dozen forms to complete. It's easy to miss one or end up rushing all over town to find the one you need.

4 The Misinterpreted Instruction
At best, IRS instructions can be tough to understand. At worst they can be mind-boggling. What you need are clear directions in plain English.

5 The Overlooked Deduction
You'd have to be a professional tax preparer to know all the deductions you're entitled to. If you miss just one, it could cost you hundreds of dollars.

6 The Exceeded Guideline
The fastest way to trigger an IRS audit is to exceed the "normal" range on one of your deductions. You need to know what the IRS looks for on a line-by-line basis.

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you directly to each item and tells you what to change and how. All in a fraction of the time you'd spend checking and revising your return manually.

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ClickArt Incredible Image Pak features a soup-to-nuts assortment of 2,000 color images, borders, graphic effects and fonts. The portfolio consists of 38 categories in an eclectic range of styles—for instance, the drawings of people are cartoonish, classic or even geometric. The package comes with a handy printed user's guide that shows you all 2,000

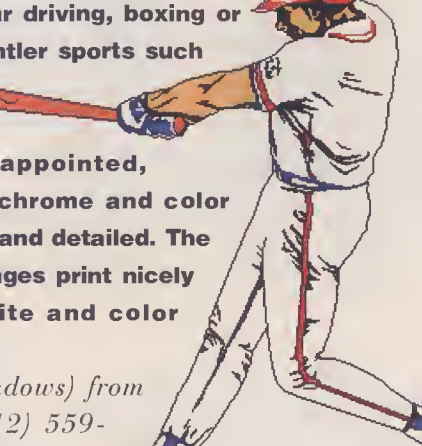


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395-0195.

Let the games begin!

you won't be disappointed, either. The monochrome and color pictures are clean and detailed. The WMF and CGM images print nicely on black-and-white and color printers.



Get off to a good—and economical—start with Clip Art for Windows. The package includes more than 500 PCX images—many in color—covering subjects from animals to business to transportation, plus flags from more than 100 countries and a healthy helping of signs and symbols. Celebrate the holidays with pictures for Valentine's Day, Easter, Independence Day, Halloween, Christmas and Hanukkah. The images have some rough edges, but the price is hard to beat.

Clip art is available in two formats: bit-mapped and vector. A bit-mapped image is created dot-by-dot; it's like making a picture in a window screen by filling in the tiny squares with drops of ink. But the more you enlarge a bit-mapped image, the less even its edges become. Bit-mapped images are typically stored in PCX (PC), BMP (PC), TIFF (PC, Mac) or PICT (Mac) file formats.

Vector images spring from a mathematical formula that manipulates lines and shapes to create a picture. When you enlarge or shrink these images, their edges remain smooth. Vector images usually use the CGM (PC), WMF (PC) or EPS (PC, Mac) file formats.

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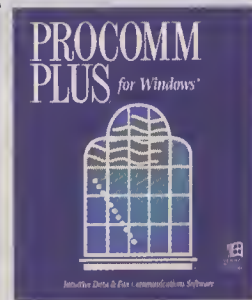


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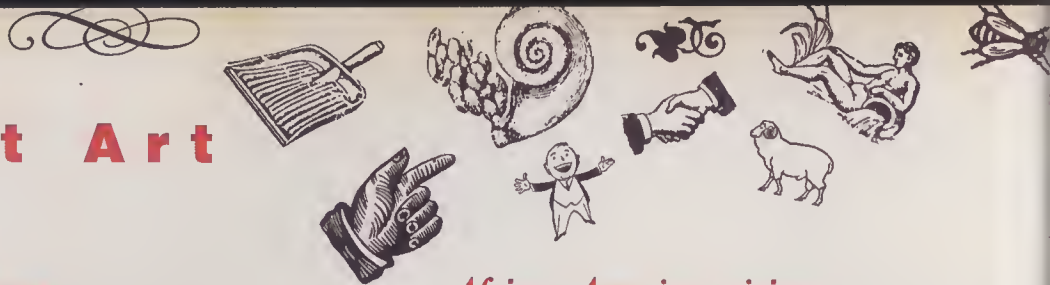
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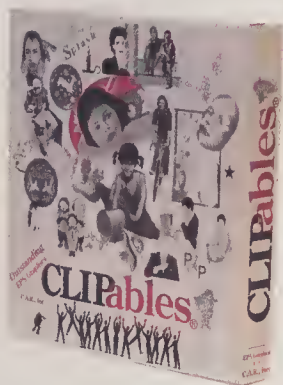
TOTALLY CONNECTED

Instant Art



Elegance and eloquence

The hand-drawn pictures in Clipables Main Library and Clipables Statements are simply elegant. The graphics are modern and clean, strikingly rendered in black and shades of gray (a color version is in the works); the images of people are especially pleasing. Main Library includes more than 1,000 EPS images, borders and symbols; some are straightforward, others are funny. Statements contains more than 150 multicultural and interpretive EPS illustrations—the latter beautifully convey abstract emotions and concepts ranging from friendship, yearning, sharing and caring to alcoholism, loneliness and despair.



Main Library, \$249.95; Statements, \$149.95 (both available for Windows, Macintosh; floppy disk or CD-ROM) from C.A.R., (800) 288-7585, (314) 454-3535.

KNOW YOUR REPRINT RIGHTS

When you buy a clip-art package, you have the right to use its images in newsletters, notes to friends or any other document or item you create for personal use. But if you want to use a clip-art image in, say, a T-shirt design you plan to sell, you must get permission from the software publisher. The image on a shirt legally constitutes a substantial portion of the value of the product, unlike the clip art in a newsletter (so you can freely use the clip art in a newsletter even if you charge readers per copy). Some companies put a copyright notice on their artwork and urge you to display it in all cases.

African-American visions

CPTIME ClipArt's historical and current African, African-American and Afro-Caribbean images cover ground that's often ignored in clip-art packages. The three-volume set includes more than 260 pictures of people (including popular leaders), maps, ethnic patterns and designs, borders, icons and symbols. The black-and-white images can be ordered in EPS, PICT or PCX formats. \$68 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh; floppy disk or CD-ROM) from AfroLink Software, (213) 731-5465.



Toon in

Other clip-art collections may include bears and computers, but only Megatoons II has bears dancing in tutus and PCs niceting a grim fate at the hands of computer hackers. The whimsical pictures spring from the imagination of cartoonist Phil Frank, whose irreverent style adds a touch of lightheartedness to any project. More than 600 black-and-white TIFF images cover everything from sports to holidays; you also get two-dozen captioned cartoons.

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Tony Roberts is a Greensboro, N.C.-based writer.

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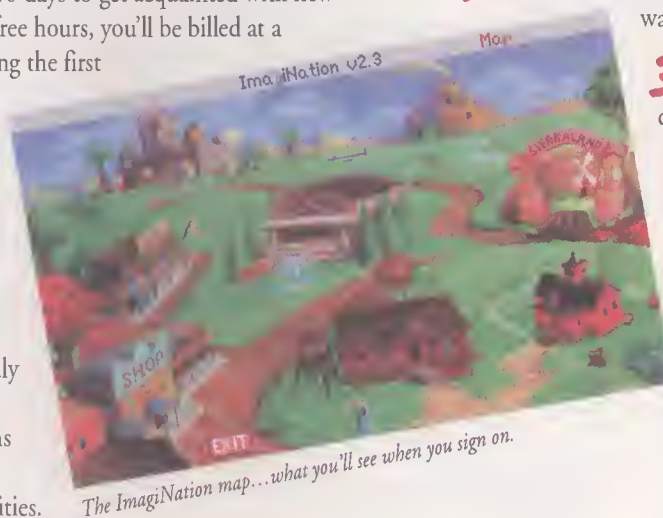
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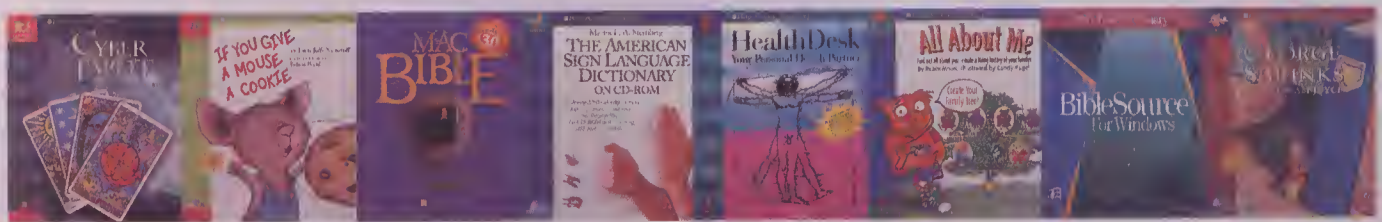
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consumer lab

YOU RATE THE PRODUCTS

We've all heard it a million times: Nothing is certain but death and taxes. Of course, one other thing is certain, too—we all regard

Jury's assessment? 2 tax programs give the best return

them both with roughly equal dread. Sad to say, your computer can't help you live forever—at least not yet. But it *can* come to your

rescue if you think April is the cruelest month and April 15 the cruelest day.

With the help of tax-preparation software, your

computer can calculate how much your tax bill comes to—or better yet, how much you'll get back from the IRS—more reliably than those of us who are, shall we say, mathemati-

cally challenged. Tax preparation software is designed to make completing your returns not only easier but more cost-effective.

At the very least, the programs act as electronic overseers, catching mistakes and ensuring a more accurate return. But since they also often point out forgotten exemptions or overlooked deductions, using the software can sometimes minimize what you shell out to Uncle Sam.

If you keep your financial records and checkbook on your computer using a program such as Quicken or Kiplinger's Simply Money, it makes perfect sense to computerize your tax filing as well. Most tax-prep programs will import information, such as expenses or income, from on-screen financial managers, saving you time and making it easier to fill out the forms.

Ah, but you say you're the type of person who gets chills just thinking about the IRS? The kind who hands your accountant a shoe box stuffed with receipts and W-2 forms and doesn't want to do anything more than sign the papers, lick the stamps and drop everything off at the post office? Tax-preparation software can help you, too; it'll organize your records more efficiently, enabling you to give your preparer everything he or she needs to get the job done fast. Submitting a return for your accountant to review and correct instead of asking him or her to start from scratch can save you money—from 30 percent to 80 percent off an accountant's fee, according to Bruce A. Haverberg, a tax attorney and certified public accountant based in Boston.

Certainly, many taxpayers are already sold on tax-preparation software. In 1993, software publishers sold 2.8 million copies of tax-preparation software for federal and state income taxes, according to the Software Publishers Association (SPA) in Washington. For the first half of 1994, tax software developers sold 1.7 million units, a 24 percent jump over the same period in 1993. Intuit, the developer of TurboTax, estimates that 3 million of us will use tax software to prepare returns this year.

Tax software clearly sells. But do the programs deliver? Can they really help the average taxpayer prepare a better return? And if



by jenny c. mccune and sean fulton

they can't make the process fun, can they at least make it more bearable?

This month, we asked six taxpayers to file into our Consumer Lab and prepare a mock federal income tax return using the four top-selling tax-preparation programs, according to figures compiled by the SPA: Parsons Technology's Personal Tax Edge, 4Home Productions' Simply Tax, MECA Software's TaxCut and Intuit's TurboTax. Our testers used the Windows versions, but three of the four programs are also available in other formats (see chart on page 134); the new CD-ROM versions were released too late for our tests. (Some software manufacturers offer state and local versions as well, but these vary from year to year; we tested only federal tax-prep packages.)

All four programs are updated each year and take into account the current tax rates and laws as provided by the IRS. They include all the forms and schedules you need to file—on screen and ready to print. And, to varying degrees, they contain tips and advice that will alert you to mistakes, uncover deductions and warn you if certain decisions are likely to trigger that dreaded audit.

The ways in which the programs convey this information varies, but certain features are common to all. For example, all use pre-emptive strikes, warning you as you go if

you're filling out the forms inaccurately. For instance, TaxCut explains that low-balling your income can backfire if people in your occupation generally make a lot more than the figure you report.



Tim, a photographer, studies our sample family's financial picture.

In addition to on-the-fly advice, the programs offer review functions to scan your completed return for overlooked deductions, possible audit flags and ways in which you can lower your tax bill this year and in the future. All offer at least two ways to handle the tax-preparation process: an "interview mode," which asks you questions and then plugs your answers into the appropriate line on the appropriate forms; and a "forms mode," which lets you fill in the forms yourself.

Some tax-preparation software includes

The *bottom line*: Consumers *grade* the tax software

All testers graded each program in eight categories. The grades were then averaged per category and overall.

	Personal Tax Edge	Simply Tax	TaxCut	TurboTax
Audit alarms	B	D	B+	B
Data input	B-	D+	B+	B
Deduction help	C	D+	B	B+
Ease of use	B	D	B+	A-
Ease of printing	B-	C	B-	A-
Overall quality	B-	D+	B+	B+
Program documentation	NA	NA	C+	B
Tax documentation	NA	NA	D+	B
Overall grade	B- (2.72)	D+ (1.48)	B (3.04)	B+ (3.44)

Meet *February's* Consumer Lab testers

(Clockwise from top left)

Tim Cady, 30, is a photographer who uses a Mac PowerBook 140 at home, and a PowerBook 180 and IBM PS/2 at work. He calls his computer experience "average." Tim uses Quicken to manage his finances but prepares his tax return by hand.

John Hewitt, 37, is a building-maintenance engineer; he repairs and upgrades computers as part of his job. While his wife uses their home PC most of the time for her typing service, the couple use Quicken to track their personal finances. In 1993, John prepared their tax return using Parsons Technology's Personal Tax Edge program.

Matt Colagiuri, 28, is an actor working on his first novel. His first computer was a Macintosh SE; today he uses a Gateway 2000 and rates his computing experience between average and above-average. He hires an accountant to prepare his taxes, usually at the end of March.

Lori DiMarco, 26, is an experienced computer user as well as a certified public accountant who prepares business tax returns. She completes her own tax return and usually starts preparing it as soon as she has all her income statements in January.

(Clockwise from top left)
Tim Cady, John Hewitt,
Matt Colagiuri, Lori
DiMarco, Carol Hendelman,
David Webber.

Carol Hendelman, 40-something, is a part-time computer instructor at Queensborough Community College in New York, with a side business in computer consulting. Hers is a two-computer household—one for her and her husband, another for their two boys, age 15 and 20. Carol keeps tabs on her finances with

Managing Your Money. Her father, a CPA, prepares her annual tax returns.

David Webber, 23, is an actuary who analyzes companies' pension plans. He's an experienced computer user and usually does his own tax return—often starting around April 10.



supplemental advice and information. Simply Tax incorporates tax tips from *The Ernst & Young Tax-Saving Strategies Guide* (John Wiley & Sons). The CD-ROM version of TurboTax includes advice from Marshall Loeb, former managing editor of *Money*, editor-at-large at *Fortune* and author of *Marshall*

pay for *your* mistakes). And should you be audited after using TaxCut, a tax professional from H & R Block will be assigned to help you prepare for the IRS hearing and will accompany you at no additional cost, regardless of whether the audit was triggered by your use of the program.

Using tax software *to organize your financial records* can cut 30 percent or more from the typical accountant's fees.

Loeb's *Money Guide*, and Mary L. Sprouse, author of *The Money Income Handbook*.

Finally, all four developers offer to pay any IRS penalties related to computation errors in the software (of course, they won't

As always, we rounded up a diverse group of testers. Our two female and four male volunteers had varying levels of computer and tax experience, from David Webber, an actuary who does his own taxes but whose home

Vital statistics: prices, requirements and features

	Personal Tax Edge	Simply Tax	TaxCut	TurboTax
Manufacturer	Parsons Technology	4Home Productions	MECA Software	Intuit
Suggested retail price	\$29	\$34.95	\$39.95	\$39.95
Formats	DOS, Windows, Windows CD-ROM	Windows	DOS, Windows, Macintosh, Windows CD-ROM	DOS, Windows, Macintosh (sold as MacInTax), Windows CD-ROM
Minimum Windows requirements (floppy version)	386, 4 MB RAM, 10 MB hard disk space, Windows 3.1	386, 4 MB RAM, 10 MB hard disk space, Windows 3.1	386, 4 MB RAM, 8 MB hard disk space, Windows 3.1	386, 4 MB RAM, 15 MB hard disk space, Windows 3.1
Automatically calculates entries	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prints IRS-approved forms	Yes	Requires laser printer	Yes	Yes
'Interview' data entry format	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
'What if' tax estimator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Joint vs. separate return comparison	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cross-reference to related forms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tax tips	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Audit warnings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Final checklist	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personal-finance programs with data connections to tax program	Quicken, Kiplinger's Simply Money, Lotus 1-2-3, Managing Your Money, Money Counts and all TXF file formats	Quicken, Kiplinger's Simply Money, Lotus 1-2-3, Managing Your Money, Money Counts and all TXF file formats	Quicken, Kiplinger's Simply Money, Lotus 1-2-3, Managing Your Money, Money Counts and all TXF file formats	Quicken, Kiplinger's Simply Money, Lotus 1-2-3, Managing Your Money, Money Counts and all TXF file formats
Electronic filing option	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Form 1040 PC support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Technical support	Toll call	Toll call	Toll call	Toll call
Customer service	(800) 223-6925 (319) 395-9626	(800) 773-5445 (516) 342-2000	(800) 820-7458 (203) 255-1441	(800) 964-1040 (619) 453-8722

computer use has been limited to game playing and word processing, to Carol Hendelman, a computer instructor at a local community college who cajoles her father, a CPA, into doing her taxes every year. We even had a ringer in the group, CPA Lori DiMarco. Only one of the six, John Hewitt, had used personal tax software to do his taxes in the past (he used Personal Tax Edge last year).

Our test crew clearly represents the U.S. population when it comes to enthusiasm about filing their tax returns. When asked what bothers him most about filing a federal return, Matt replied, "Doing it myself." (To meet all our testers, turn to page 133.)

To help our testers put the programs through their paces, we asked CPA Haverberg to develop a complex but typical tax scenario for a fictitious family of four: John Q. and Mary Public and their two children, John Jr., 15, and Susie Q., 10. Computer consultant Mary has a home-based business with a 1994 gross income of \$50,000. Her office expenses are fairly typical: telephone, advertising and promotion, meals and entertainment, and so on. Her husband, a salesman at Life and Death Life Insurance Company, earned \$60,000 in 1994. The couple's two dependent children are still in school, but both have savings accounts. The Publics own a home, which they bought in 1989 for \$225,000.

The family's tax situation covers typical



Carol's dad does her taxes; her use of a PC will make his job easier.

topics for a middle-income family: interest and dividend income on investments, home-office deductions, charitable contributions, a mortgage deduction on their home and interest income from each family member's savings account. We also had Mary make the maximum contribution to a Self-Employed Pension/Individual Retirement Account (referred to in tax lingo as an SEP/IRA).

Our testers were provided with an outline



John used a PC to file his own '93 return.

of the Publics' income and expenses. In addition, where the Publics' financial situation was different from the returns our testers prepared for themselves, we provided a tip sheet designed by Haverberg that highlighted some important issues for our testers to keep an eye on while preparing the return. No one in our group faces issues such as excise tax or the business use of an automobile in their own lives, and we didn't want that lack of familiarity to color their evaluations of the products' performance.

Each tester used all four programs, taking as much time as they needed to finish the return. After they completed a return using a program, we asked them to grade the package in a variety of categories, including tax documentation (information on tax laws), program documentation (manuals and instructions), help in figuring deductions, audit alarms, data input, ease of use and overall quality. Each tester assigned a letter grade on a scale of A to F for every program in each category. We then asked them to explain the reasons for their assessments and grades in post-test interviews, some of which are discussed in the reviews that follow.

All the programs were tested on Micron Pentium-based PCs with 8 megabytes of RAM attached to Canon BJ-200 black-and-white ink jet printers.

What our audit shows

Our testers examined beta, or pre-release, versions of the programs. The government often makes changes in the tax laws right up

until the end of the year, and tax programs can't be finalized until all the new laws are in place. (Complete and updated versions are usually available to consumers by late January or early February.)

All the programs were unfinished at test time, so they exhibited a few technical prob-

lems. They cited TurboTax's straightforward explanations and its ability to lead taxpayers step by step through the tax-preparation process. "Using this software is the next best thing to having a CPA do your return," said tester Matt Colagiuri.

TaxCut finished right behind TurboTax

Our testers said *TurboTax's* simple explanations and *step-by-step* instructions were the next best thing to *going to a CPA*.

lems, which is typical in pre-release versions of computer software. While our testers had to grapple with these bugs, you won't; we made sure our testers ignored programming errors and focused on how well the software helped them prepare the Publics' return.

The result? Even though the version of TurboTax that our testers examined was prone to seizing up and missing a good deal of its tax-help information, our testers liked it best of the four programs, awarding it a

with a B average. Although testers liked TaxCut's easy data entry features and on-screen tax help, it lost points for poor manuals, both for the program and for tax preparation. Personal Tax Edge came in third with generally mediocre grades (and a B- overall), while Simply Tax brought up the rear with a D+. Although Matt said Simply Tax is in many ways the most innovative of all the programs, he, along with our other testers, said it is also the most confusing to use—people trying to put together an accurate tax return seem less concerned with a flashy presentation than with getting the job done.

If you're comfortable using a computer, there's no reason you can't prepare your own federal return with a tax-preparation program. "For the individual who is willing to read and think things through, these programs can be an excellent way to learn more about their tax situation and complete their own return," said Haverberg.

And time is on tax-preparation software's side. The Internal Revenue Service estimates that it took an individual taxpayer about seven hours and 24 minutes to complete and file Form 1040 for 1993 (including time spent boning up on how to complete the form), and that doesn't include preparing any additional forms. In 1988, the first year the IRS tracked preparation time, the figure was only six hours.

But none of our testers took even that long to file the complete return for the Public family, which ran about 24 pages and included special forms such as Form 4562, for Depreciation and Amortization for mortgage interest. It took testers from one hour to five hours and 45 minutes to prepare the returns in our lab tests. Of course the time spent filing taxes varies with the individual, but most of us can use all the help we can get. Reviews begin on page 138.

Research assistance provided by Dave Galletta, Patrick Gaynor, Melissa Gelb, Bill Manley, Sun Ying Tam and Jennifer Triverio. Reporting by Judy Hogan. Accounting services provided by Bruce A. Harerberg.

SIX TAX FACTS

- **The IRS received about 115 million returns last year.**
- **Forty-eight percent of tax filers last year consulted a professional accountant.**
- **Nineteen percent of last year's returns had a "math error," a catch-all category that includes failure to sign the return, actual math errors, using the wrong tax rate and so forth.**
- **Last year, 5 million people filed for a four-month extension on April 15, which gave them until August 15 to file their return. (But if they owed money, they had to pay estimated taxes by April 15.) Still more people simply filed their return late without getting an OK in advance from the IRS.**
- **The IRS estimates that 7 million people failed to file a 1993 return.**
- **Last year, 1,187,240 returns were audited—or 1 percent of the total.**



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• Personal Tax Edge



Personal Tax Edge finished third overall in our tests, largely because it provided users with too little information about the types of deductions they could take.

"It's an OK program, helpful to the beginner, but nothing to get nuts over," said Matt Colagiuri. "It's very straightforward, but doesn't go out of its way to make things easy."

Personal Tax Edge received its highest grades for flagging audit problems and ease of use (B's in each category). But our testers rated at least one other program higher than Personal Tax Edge in every category they considered.

The program's audit feature—which you can run once you've completed your return—is better than those in earlier versions. Rather than simply identifying a potential tax prob-

over mistakes), while Lori couldn't figure out how to delete data and added that, "the software's 'Help' function didn't help me."

On the other hand, testers found several features that make this program unique. Carol Hendelman liked the ease with which Personal Tax Edge allowed her to compare the returns of a couple filing jointly or separately, without having to fill in the same data

"The software's 'Help' function didn't help me." — **Lori DiMarco**

B-

Scorecard

Highest grade:
Audit alarms:
B

Lowest grade:
Deduction help:
C

Minimum requirements:

386,
4 MB of RAM,
10 MB of hard
disk space,
Windows 3.1

Will filling in the details give you a Personal Tax Edge? It's a start.

lem, the program takes the user directly to the problem area on the tax form.

Personal Tax Edge got its lowest grade, a C, for its poor assistance in identifying legitimate deductions in the return—charitable donations, for example, and automobile costs for the self-employed.

CPA Lori DiMarco faulted the program for being too lenient in allowing deductions. She entered one extraordinarily high deduction that should have set off a red flag in the program but didn't. "The program carried it through, and it shouldn't have," she admonished.

And while Personal Tax Edge received a B for ease of use, our testers found plenty of room for improvement. David Webber lamented the program's inability to highlight and type over numbers (you have to backspace

twice. This feature lets couples easily see which filing status results in a lower tax bill.

Tim Cady appreciated the on-screen checklist of possible audit problems, which users can scroll for ideas about how to prepare a better return—and avoid a meeting with the IRS.

David said Personal Tax Edge (\$29) offered the best value; Carol disagreed, saying it wasn't worth the price. And Matt found it a bit dry compared with the programs in our group that offered a few lighthearted features.

One potentially serious problem that should be fixed by the time you buy the program in stores involves the way in which Personal Tax Edge calculated home-office space. Both Lori and Matt discovered that the program used .05 percent in its calculations rather than the correct 5 percent, and neither one of them could figure out a way to

override the mistake. When we notified Parsons Technology of the problem, company representatives promised that the mistake would be fixed by the time the finished product is released.



GOOD NEWS

- Audit alarms alert you to potential sticking points with the IRS



BAD NEWS

- Too relaxed in flagging questionable deductions

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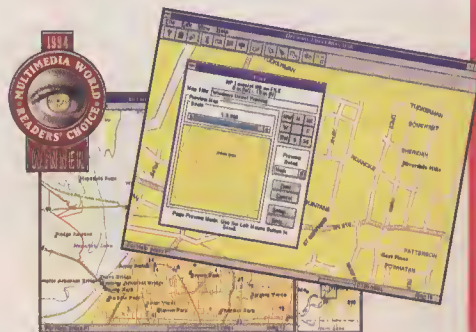
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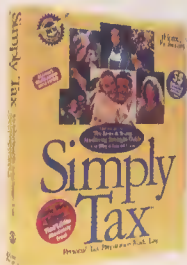


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D+

Scorecard

Highest grade:
Ease of printing:
C

Lowest grade:
Audit alarms:
D

Minimum requirements:

386,
4 MB of RAM,
10 MB of hard
disk space,
Windows 3.1

Simply Tax is simply awful. It has a busy look that, when coupled with its disjointed question-and-answer, or "interview," process, makes it both unattractive and difficult to use. Our testers deemed its look too cluttered and confusing and gave it a big thumbs down.

While most of the testers said they admired the program's attempts at innovation, they said it seemed to them to be an experiment gone awry. "It has the greatest potential of them all," said David Webber, but, he added, "it also has the most serious flaws."

Our testers' complaints centered on the program's complex on-screen presentation. For example, in the "interview mode" (which in other programs is typically the easiest way for users to enter data), the program confronts you with two windows: one containing the interview question, another with background information on that question. After you answer the question, a "What Now" window pops up

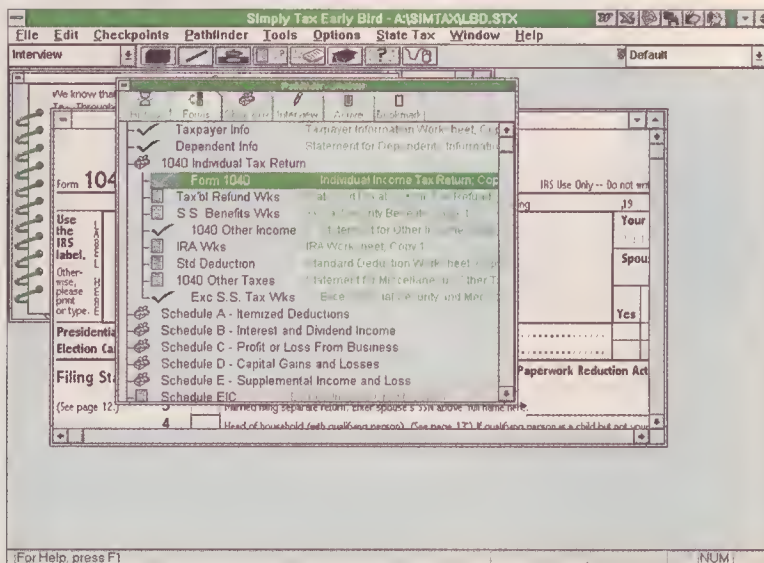
"It has the greatest potential...and the most serious flaws." — David Webber

and tells you what to do next or adds further details to the question and/or background information. Computer Associates, which makes the program, calls this "context-sensitive help," but our testers called it overwhelming—they felt bombarded by all the windows, questions and information.

Like other programs we tested, Simply Tax is designed as an on-screen notebook with tabs at the side of the screen (Welcome, Last Year, Import, Interview, Pathfinder, Validation, Tax Savings, Filing and Cleanup); an icon view bar, which opens and closes windows such as Tax Form, Interview, Explanation, IRS Instructions, *The Ernst & Young Tax-Saving Strategies Guide 1995* and What Now?; the icons themselves; two ways of preparing a return (interview and forms); and pull-down menus above the icons. Does it sound confusing? The overflow of options left our testers bewitched, bothered and bewildered.

David complained that Simply Tax's in-

terview process had neither rhyme nor reason. Instead of asking questions in a logical fashion (by tax-form line or topic, for example), the program asks questions in seemingly random order. And if that's not disorienting enough, Simply Tax repeats questions several times in the interview process, causing many testers to distrust the software.



Our testers penalized Simply Tax for its cluttered appearance.

"The interview forms took me back to the beginning without completing all the information," complained CPA Lori DiMarco.

Our testers also complained that one touch of the Tab key or click of the mouse doesn't move you to the next data field; often, you must do both. "Movement was exceedingly difficult," David reported.

Praise was rare indeed for Simply Tax, which scored no higher than a C in any category. David singled it out for prompting you to include children's income. He also cited Simply Tax's "page marking," which lets you identify pages with notes. Other than that, our testers found this program too taxing.



GOOD NEWS

- Pathfinder feature keeps a "family tree" of forms you're using now or might need in the future.

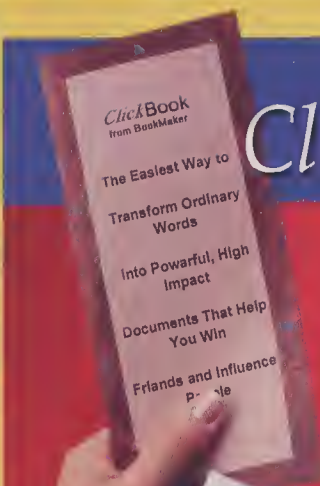
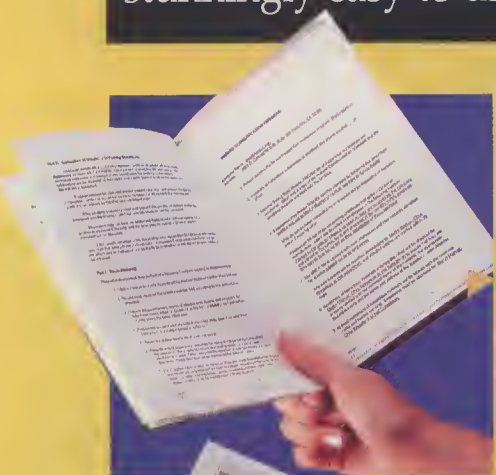


BAD NEWS

- Tedious to navigate and difficult to follow.

"ClickBook is a great utility that's stunningly easy to use."

-PC MAGAZINE, NOV. 23, 1993



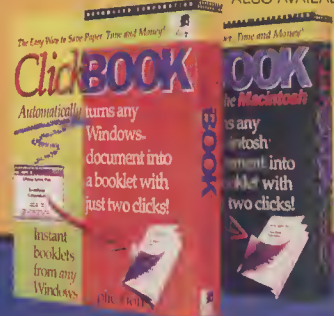
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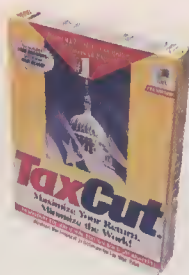
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• TaxCut



B

Scorecard

Highest grade:
Audit alarms:
B+

Lowest grade:
Tax documenta-
tion: **D+**

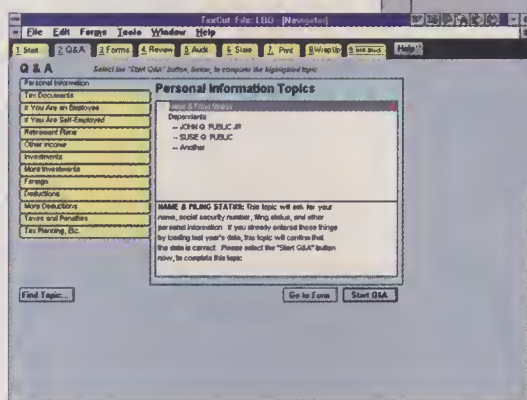
Minimum require- ments:

386,
4 MB of RAM,
8 MB of hard
disk space,
Windows 3.1

TaxCut finished second-best in our tests, winning praise from our panel for a straight-forward approach that avoids coming across as either patronizing or overly simplistic.

"I liked the fact that [TaxCut] was sort of no-nonsense," said Matt Colagiuri. In contrast, he felt that "TurboTax was very remedial. It seemed to cater more to the complete idiot in terms of taking your hand and really leading you through it."

Although TaxCut received an overall grade of B, slightly lower than the B+ TurboTax received, our testers said the main difference between



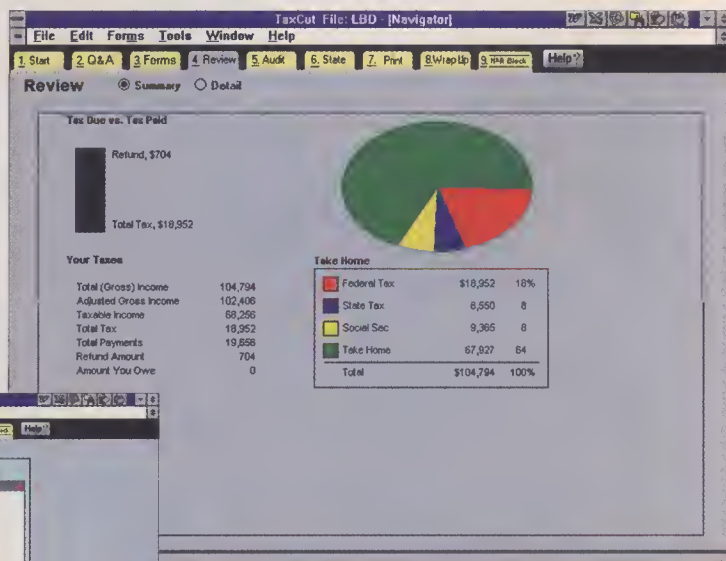
the two programs was the printed manuals for both the program and tax preparation. Matt called TaxCut's descriptions "concise," but other testers found it "skimpy."

"It is exceptionally well organized and laid out very logically." — **Tim Cady**

Indeed, the program's lowest scores were a D+ for tax documentation, which measures how much information the program provides about tax-return preparation, and a C+ for program documentation, which explains how to use the software.

TaxCut won top honors among the four programs our testers used for both audit alarms (B+) and data input (B+). The program's audit feature evaluates your finished return and prepares a report telling you what information is missing, pointing out possible problems and giving tax-saving suggestions. From the report, you can go directly to the related area on the appropriate tax form to correct the problem.

The program uses a file-folder analogy it calls "The Navigator." Each folder has a name tab—Start, Q&A, Forms, Review, Audit and so on—and you simply click on the tab to enter the section. "[It is] exceptionally well organized and laid out very logically, [with] every bit of information given," said Tim Cady.



The Lab's assessors deemed TaxCut top-rate.

Carol Hendelman noted that TaxCut lets users remove the program from their hard disk after tax season, but not before leaving behind a copy of their completed tax return. "This way, all you have to do the next year is reinstall, and you don't have to worry about the program eating up disk space all year long," she said.

And TaxCut won praise from our testers for making it a little more fun to complete a tax return. "I like the sense of humor they worked in," said Matt. "It says things like, 'If you're a brain surgeon and report only \$10,000 [in income], it might raise some eyebrows.' I thought to have some comedy in what was really a dry subject was helpful."



GOOD NEWS

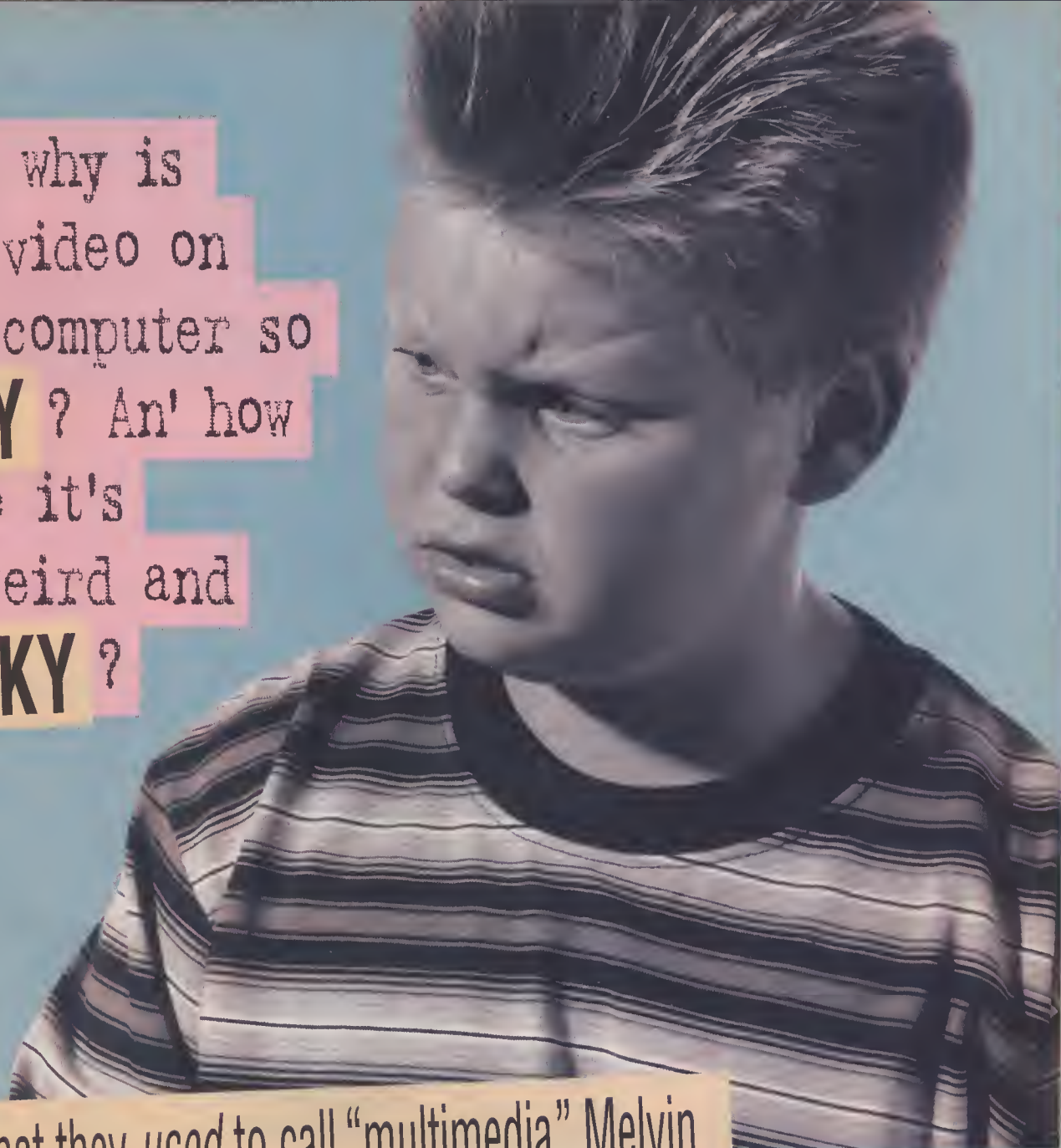
• Less remedial than other programs, it "cuts to the chase."



BAD NEWS

• Short manual deemed "skimpy" by some users.

Mom, why is
the video on
the computer so
TINY? An' how
come it's
so weird and
JERKY?



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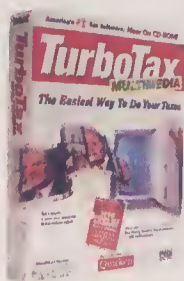
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SIGMA DESIGNS

• TurboTax



B+

Scorecard

Highest grade:

Ease of use:

A-

Lowest grade:

Audit alarms:

B

Minimum requirements:

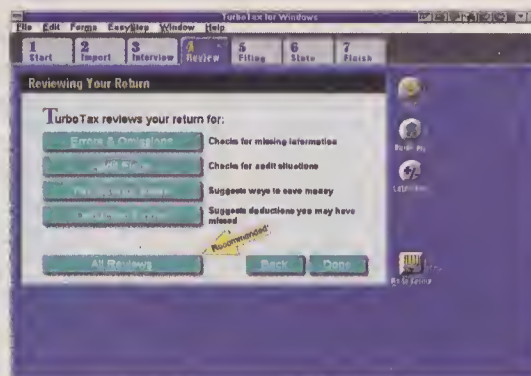
386,
4 MB of RAM,
15 MB of hard
disk space,
Windows 3.1

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David liked the program's interview method, called EasyStep. TurboTax asks you questions about your tax situation, compiles information and then enters your answers on the tax forms in the program automatically. Although you can also work directly on the forms, the EasyStep feature was largely responsible for this program's highest grade, an A- for ease of use. In fact, it was the highest grade awarded by our testers to any tax program in any category.

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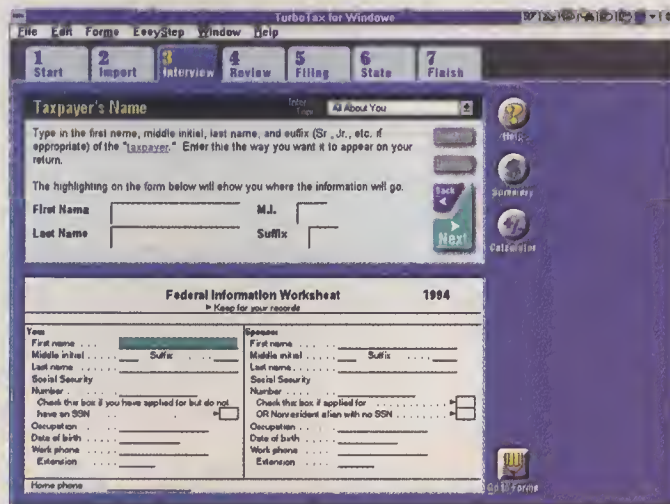
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The program scored the highest grade, a B+, among all the programs for its deduction assistance. It also took top honors in tax and program documentation (B's), ease of use (A-) and overall quality (B+).

And TurboTax prompts users periodically to save their work, a little detail that means a lot.

Though Matt Colagiuri lost all his work when the program crashed and burned on him—a result of the version we used being not quite ready for prime time—he held no grudges against TurboTax. The only fault he and our other testers could find with

the program was that it's not a human tax preparer. "The one thing missing is the human spontaneity," Matt said. •



TurboTax's screen organization impressed our testers.

Testers liked the fact that they didn't have to use a mouse to navigate the program, but could instead use arrow keys or the Tab key. It's easy to click on the Next or Back buttons to move through TurboTax; if you're in the interview mode, you just hit the Go to Forums or Go to Interview buttons to bounce between the two. The program's clean, uncluttered look made it easier to use than some of the other programs, which our testers complained were overloaded with icons, help windows and unnecessary on-screen ornamentation.

TurboTax also seemed to strike the right balance between entertainment and information, never appearing too frivolous when it came time to offer advice. "There are



GOOD NEWS

- EasyStep feature walks you through tax preparation



BAD NEWS

- Poor tips on preparing return in pre-release version

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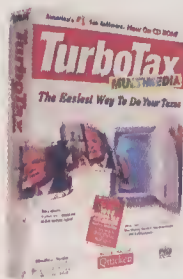
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• TurboTax



B+

Scorecard

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Ease of use:

A-

Lowest grade:
Audit alarms:

B

Minimum requirements:

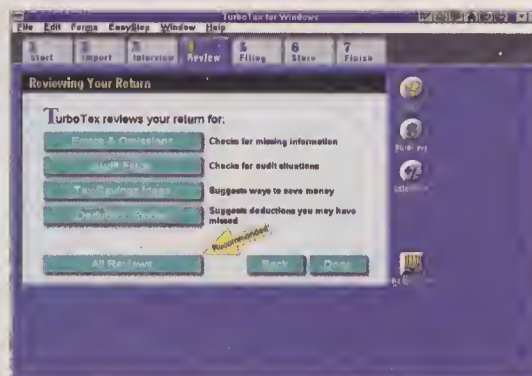
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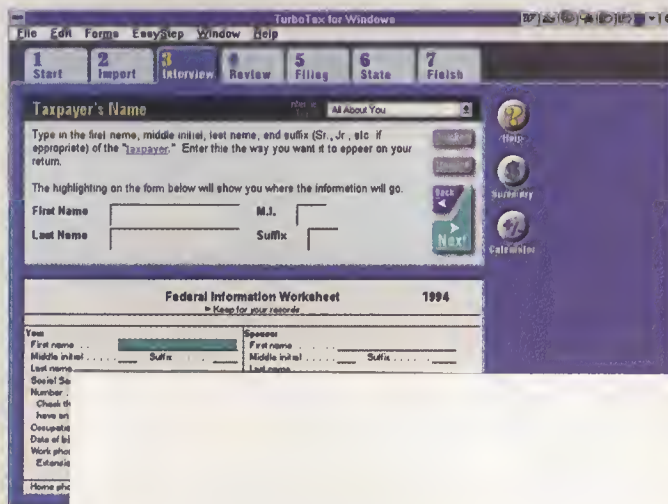
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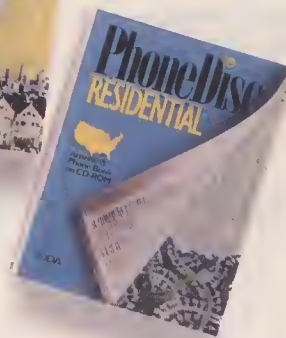
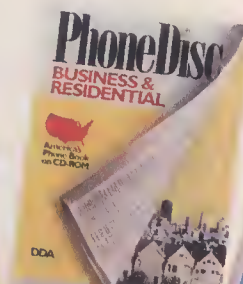
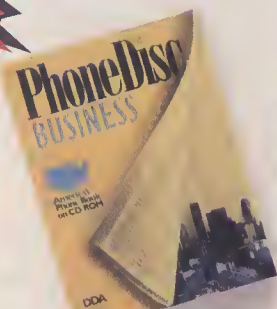
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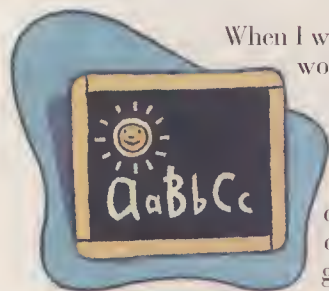
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preschool - grade 3

GIVING KIDS A GOOD HEAD START



When I was young, I always envied the kid who won the annual spelling bee. As if by magic, the letters of words I'd never even heard of, like "chagrin" or "dervish" or "etymologist," danced off the champ's tongue in perfect order. This talent seemed so mysterious to me—it had to be an inherited gift that just wasn't in my genes.

Today, as a teacher, I realize there is no such thing as a natural-born speller. Now, I admit my own spelling talents could still stand some improvement—I'm forever grateful for the spell-checker on my PC—but the

Exercises in letter and sound recognition are included in many of the top reading software programs, such as Reader Rabbit's Interactive Reading Journey (see our review in January's Kid Raves section) and The Book of Shadow-boxes (see our review in this issue's Kid Raves).

Whatever the trend in school, a number of programs offer specific activities that help the young speller. A good one to start with is Alphabet Blocks, which stars a lovable monkey named Bananas and a cheerful jack-in-the-box named Jack. In a playroom, Bananas and Jack introduce kids to the alphabet on colored blocks on screen. The characters prompt children to identify the letters by sight and sound. ("Which one starts with zzzzzzz?" Bananas might ask, making a buzzing noise.)

The program switches between upper- and lowercase letters, and the animated stars are

Learning to spell? PC's role is letter-perfect

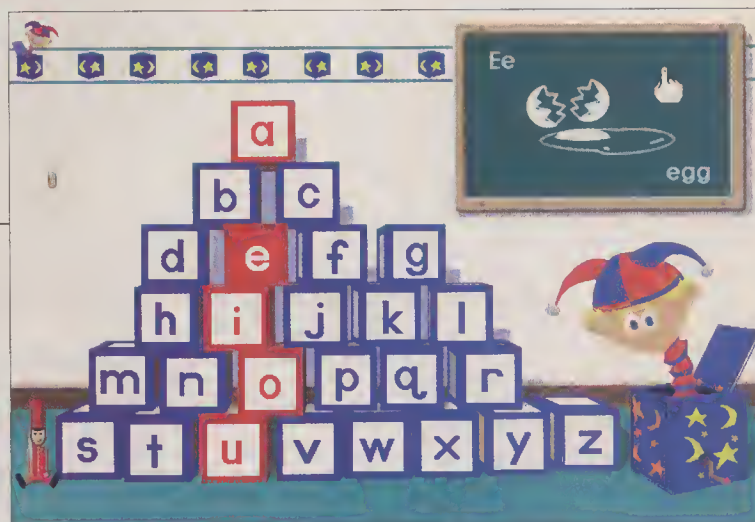
best time to hone these skills is when you're young. And luckily, for children with the right computer software, learning to spell is now less work and more play.

While all educators agree that spelling is an important part of learning to read and write, they disagree about the best way to teach it. In many schools, spelling

is no longer taught as a separate topic. Educators in these schools believe that spelling skills develop naturally as kids learn about words in their regular reading and writing exercises.

Traditionalists, on the other hand, argue that spelling is a skill in its own right and that it should be approached as such, with specific drills in basic words and rules that let children know immediately when something's amiss ("i before e," for example).

Either way, the lessons rely on kids' ability to recognize letters and sounds, a skill most children develop at an early age. From the moment kids first look at a book, even as Mom or Dad reads to them, they begin to connect the sight of letters with the sounds they hear, and to understand that distinct sequences and patterns of letters form words.



very supportive, consistently congratulating kids when they get the answers right and encouraging them to try again when they don't. Alphabet Blocks is also a pioneer of lip-sync animation in young children's educational software; the characters' mouths move exactly as ours do when we form certain sounds.

As children grow, they begin to recognize patterns—the similarities in the way words like "house" and "mouse" sound and the way they are spelled, for instance—through reading, rhyming and word-recognition games.

Read With Me 2 features a game called Word Traveler that makes these patterns plain. The activity asks kids to attach a consonant

A red-letter

day: In

Alphabet

Blocks.

Jack introduces

kids to

letters by sight

and sound.



Wedding vowels: Uniting letters in Read With Me 2.

to other letter combinations to make words. When kids see an "f" or "m," for instance, they can tack on "at" or "an" to create a word—fat, fan, mat or man. As children form the words on screen, a voice pronounces them and uses them in sentences. At the game's easier levels, the program displays appropriate pictures—a fat man, a fan, a mat—at the bottom of the

screen. A Personal Dictionary lets kids store their words for review later on.

By the time children enter grade school and exercise their spelling skills in the classroom, more advanced programs help them apply spelling strategies consistently and recognize compound words.

In Spelling Jungle, for instance, Spelling River is flooded, and children must guide a

character named Wali upstream to discover the cause. Yodi, a wizard, appears from time to time along the way to pronounce the words kids will have to spell to help Wali. Letters pop up at different spots in the scenes, and children move Wali upriver by choosing the ones that spell the given word correctly.

Spelling Jungle also encourages kids to look for strategies to uncover

proper spellings using Yodi's playful hints, or "magic spells." For instance, in the word "practice," his spell is, "It's fun to practice skating on the ice." The trick helps kids associate the sound and spelling of the word "ice" with the sound and spelling at the end of "practice."

Spelling and reading software programs are effective supplements to the formal instruction your child receives in school. They let kids make their own discoveries about words through interactive play and add some fun with friendly characters such as Bananas, Jack and Yodi. Of course, they work even better if you reinforce the spelling lessons when your child's away from the computer. For example, encourage your child to think about words and letters by organizing a scavenger hunt for objects around the house that begin with the same letter.

Or, create a Letter Book: Label each page with a letter and work with your child to paste in pictures of items that begin with that letter. (Be sure to point out when a letter has more than one sound—the hard sound of "c" in "car" compared with its soft sound in "city," for instance.) When your child is comfortable with letters and sounds at the beginning of words, start a new Letter Book that concentrates on ending sounds and letters, such as the "s" in circus.

Consult your child's teacher for a list of frequently used words for your child's age group and incorporate those words, as well as those for your child's favorite animals, toys or insects, in the activities you devise at home.

Remember, kids' attitudes about words develop hand-in-hand with their spelling abilities. Make mastering new words at the PC interesting and exciting, and kids will develop lifelong vocabulary skills. And who knows—maybe with the right programs today, they'll never need to use the spell-checker tomorrow. ●



Carol Klenow, a HomePC education adviser, is director of information resources for the Oakland Schools in Waterford, Mich.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the reading and spelling software mentioned in this article.

Alphabet Blocks

Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707, (206) 649-9800

\$34.95 (Windows, Macintosh)

\$39.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM)

Interactive Reading Journey

The Learning Company, (800) 552-2255, (510) 792-2101

\$99.95 (Windows CD-ROM)

Read With Me 2

WordPerfect Main Street, (800) 561-2511,

(501) 225-5000

\$39 (Windows)

The Book of Shadowboxes: A Story of the ABC's

EduQuest, (800) 595-5542, (404) 644-4551

\$39.95 (Windows CD-ROM)

\$49.95 with coloring book (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM)

\$59.95 with doll (Windows CD-ROM)

Spelling Jungle

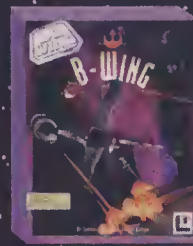
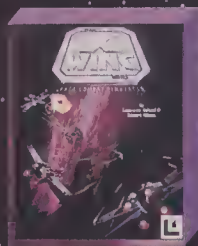
Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707, (206) 649-9800

\$34.95 (Windows, Macintosh; both floppy disk versions require 14-15 MB of hard disk space)

\$39.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM)

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

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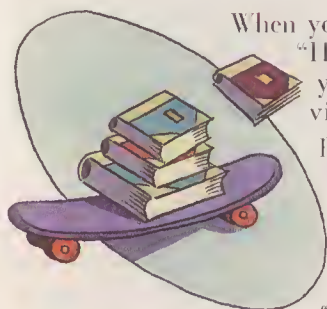
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grades 4 - 8

ENCOURAGING A LOVE OF LEARNING



When your 9-year-old wakes you up to ask, "How does the remote control work?" you might assume the worst: The device is on the floor in a thousand pieces, and your child wants to glue it back together before you try tuning in Katie Couric.

You struggle out of bed, then resume normal breathing when you find the remote intact. But as you fumble for the coffee, your budding Einstein repeats the question. Slowly, it dawns on you that he really *does* want to know how the remote works—and you don't have a clue.

Luckily, you don't have to. Your job is to

plaining mechanical information about everyday items in consistently intriguing ways. Others give children more hands-on activity.

The game *Gizmos and Gadgets*, for example, employs several basic properties of physical science, including force, balance, electricity and magnetism, to demonstrate how machines work. Kids enter a maze with a blueprint of a vehicle—a blimp, an airplane or a go-cart—to build for a big race against evildoer Morty Maxwell. The parts on the blueprint are clearly identified, and kids click on each to learn what role each individual part plays in the whole, and the scientific principles that affect its performance.

Kids building things? Now *that's* constructive thinking

show your child how to find the answers and, more important, help him or her understand the broad concepts of how things work.

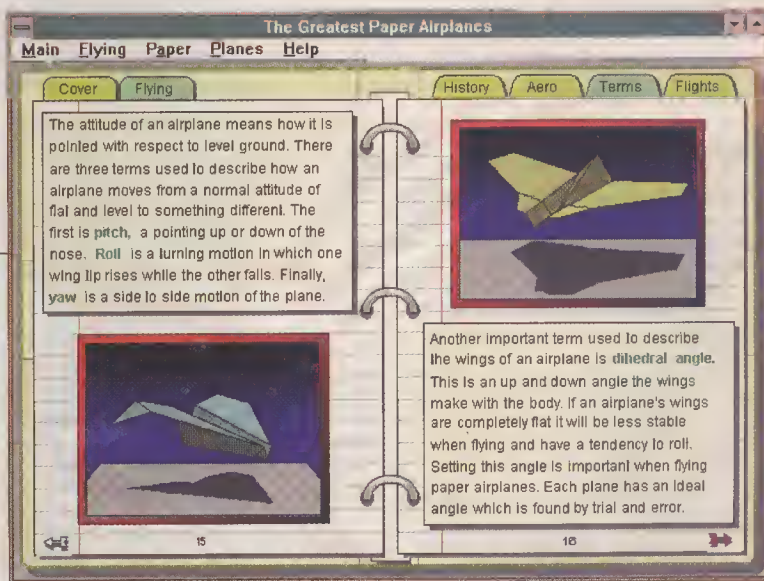
Curiosity about the mechanics of common objects leads kids to explore how parts of a system interrelate, and ultimately helps encourage the problem-solving skills that children will need all

Players open doors within the maze by making simple gadgets—for example, placing a fulcrum at the proper point to make a teeter-totter. Behind each door lies a part they may

Folding patterns:
The Greatest Paper Airplanes
←
shows kids how they can fly rings around the competition.

their lives. Unlike the exercises kids find in textbooks, many everyday questions lack neat solutions; they require strategic thinking and the will to experiment. Projects that show kids how to assemble, test and perform specific tasks help them understand how discrete steps, when linked, can create a greater whole. They also give kids the chance to bask in the glow of accomplishment that comes with successful experimentation.

A number of software programs can help kids learn to examine and adjust variable conditions and, ultimately, understand what makes certain devices tick. The *Way Things Work* (see our review in this issue's Home Library) takes a fun, innovative approach, ex-



need to create their vehicle. If their custom-built buggy is too slow, Morty Maxwell wins and the kids must return to the maze to reconsider the properties of each part and recombine the elements for a speedier racer.

Parents can reinforce the program's lessons by pointing out ways in which the same principles apply in real life. For example, the smaller the wheels on a bike, the harder kids have to pedal to race down the block.

Problem-solving takes to the skies in *The Greatest Paper Airplanes*. The program is

by sharon mcco y bell

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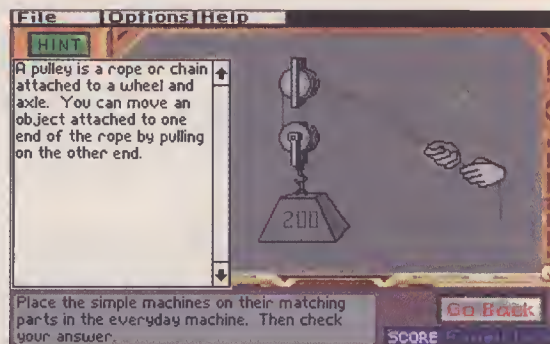
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

packed with lessons in the theory and history of flight that get kids excited about building exotic paper planes. My young friend Courtney, 11, eagerly explored the story of aviation in text, graphics and animation, from how kites soar to Leonardo da Vinci's musings on flight.

Once kids absorb the basics, the program shows them 25 step-by-step designs for everything from paper gliders to jets. Print them out, fold according to the on-screen instructions and taxi for takeoff.

Three goofy gadget programs—The Incredible Machine, The Even More Incredible Machine and Sid & Al's Incredible Toons—present kids with a problem and a pile of parts to build a machine to solve it. The programs aren't steeped in science—plans include fire-breathing dragons that pop balloons and heat teapots to create the steam that powers engines—but they get children thinking while keeping them entertained.

Kids love software that gives them a sense of accomplishment



Can kids win the big race in Gizmos and Gadgets? They'll have to pull a few strings...

for solving a thorny problem—but sometimes they love it too much. My big problem now is coaxing Courtney away from my PC so I can get back to work. Maybe she'd like to investigate how the remote control works... •



Sharon McCoy Bell is director of the Information Technology Center of the New Orleans Public Schools and a former middle-school teacher. In 1993, she won the Computerworld Smithsonian International Technology Leadership Award for Education.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the mechanics software mentioned in this article.

Gizmos and Gadgets

The Learning Company, (800) 552-2255, (510) 792-2101
\$45 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh, Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM)

The Greatest Paper Airplanes

Kitty Hawk Software, (800) 358-9622, (602) 622-2200
\$29.95 (DOS, Windows)

The Incredible Machine series

Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707, (503) 343-0772
\$34.95 (The Even More Incredible Machine, Sid & Al's Incredible Toons: DOS, Windows)
\$39.95 (The Even More Incredible Machine: DOS CD-ROM; Sid & Al's Incredible Toons: Windows CD-ROM)
\$44.95 (The Incredible Machine: DOS)
\$49.95 (The Incredible Machine: DOS CD-ROM)

The Way Things Work

D.K. Multimedia, (800) 225-3362, (212) 213-4500
\$99.95 (Windows CD-ROM)

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.



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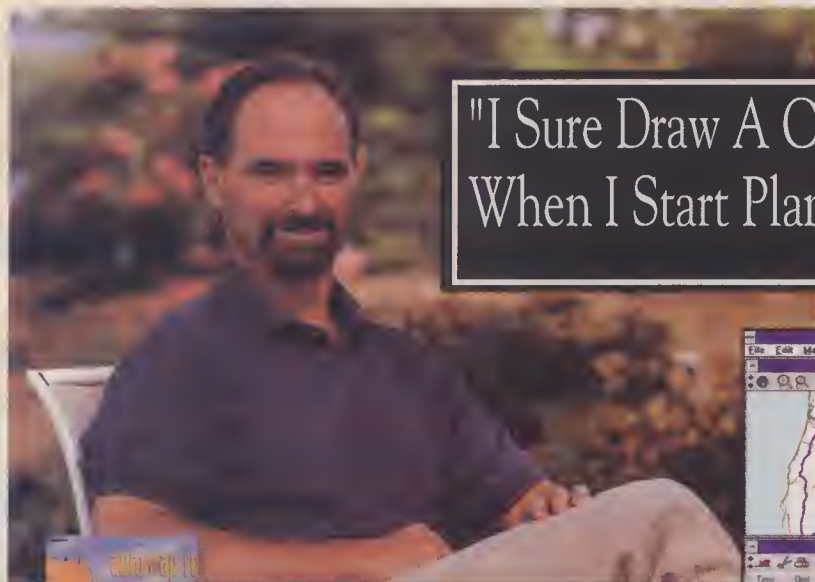
- *Computer Fun Set™* for ages 3-10
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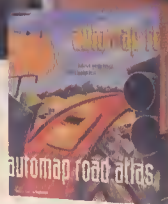


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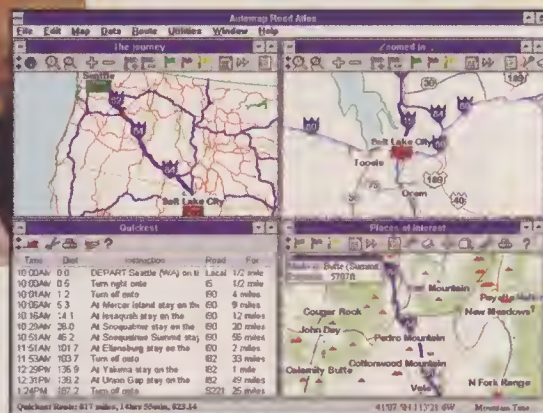
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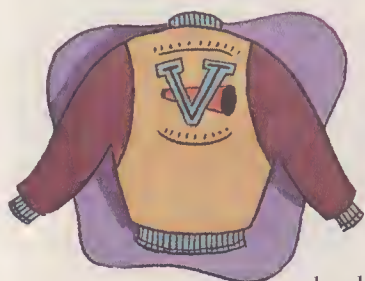
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education grades 9 - 12

HELPING TEENS DEFINE THEIR FUTURE



My 16-year-old daughter thinks astronomy is out of this world. Mandy grew up on a steady diet of science fiction from Hollywood, and all her life she's watched dramatic, real footage from outer space on the evening news and in feature reports. She has witnessed everything from moon landings and solar eclipses to the shattering impact of the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet on Jupiter last summer.

That celestial collision, along with May's solar eclipse and the 25th anniversary of the

trict, its information is often old and, in many cases, no longer accurate.

Luckily for today's students, computer software provides what textbooks can't—timely, in-depth and entertaining information that turns your PC into a virtual planetarium. The software offers the universe in text and visuals, including charts and photographs collected by NASA on missions into deep space. Kids can view close-ups of Jupiter and Saturn taken by the Voyager probes, or revealing shots of Venus from the Magellan mission. Some of the programs automatically plot and display the movement of celestial bodies according to any

In today's astronomy lessons, multimedia's the star

Apollo 11 lunar landing, piqued Mandy's interest and led her to embark on her own exploration of outer space.

OK, she also had a science paper due. But she *was* excited about her research, not so much because of her high-school science class but as a result of using mesmerizing multimedia software on our home computer. A quick look at her science textbook shows what a difference software makes. Although the book was published recently, its material is

time interval you select, so kids can watch an eclipse in its entirety or jump back to March 1986 to track the daily travels of Halley's comet—all in a matter of minutes.

Planetarium programs produce detailed star charts, and many can be tailored to specific interests. Want to see only the planets?

Programs such as Distant Suns easily eclipse science textbooks with their astronomical detail.

dated, superficial and, worst of all, boring. Astronomy gets short shrift, sandwiched between sections on geology and scientific measurement. The photos of the solar system remind me of the ones in the science textbook I used in high school. And there's no mention of the Voyager missions of the 1970s and '80s, much less the troubled Hubble Space Telescope, which still orbits Earth today.

Sad to say, Mandy's textbook is typical. Astronomy changes so rapidly that keeping textbooks up to date is a difficult—if not impossible—task for textbook companies. By the time a book is written, published and adopted by a state or local school dis-



No problem. How about a closer look at the constellations? You can do that, too. Teens can make printouts of the software's star charts and take them outdoors to compare with the heavenly panorama. Then, using a telescope or a pair of strong binoculars, they can map out paper star charts based on their own observations and check the results against the data on the computer screen.

For example, using Expert Astronomer, Mandy and I typed in the current date and

by richard feutz

selected Seattle, our hometown, from a menu of cities. The program presented us with a view of the sky overhead, just as it looked to us that night. Mandy and I spent the evening shuttling between our den and deck, using the software's tools to identify and learn about the stars and planets we spotted with our own eyes.

The CD-ROM version of Expert Astronomer lets you view related information in a multimedia database of articles, photographs and film footage. We used it to compare photos of stars and nebulae shot by the Hubble telescope before and after the NASA mission that corrected the telescope's faulty optics.

Fly me to the moon

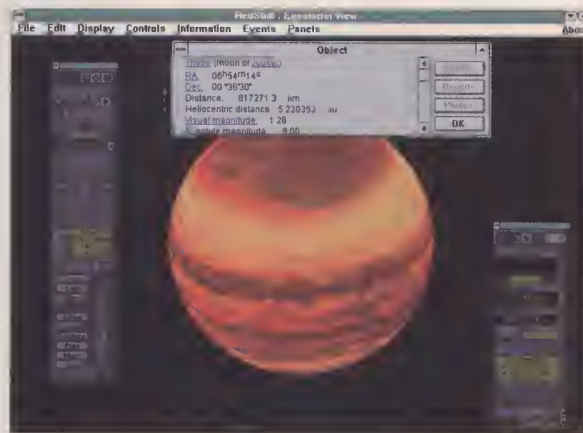
RedShift's PC planetarium goes even further. Kids may need some practice to master its sophisticated controls—which provide views from various planets, a time-travel calendar, and latitude and longitude options that pinpoint any area of the sky—but once they do, they can look spaceward from almost anywhere in the solar system.

Ever wonder how Earth would look if you were standing on Mars? RedShift will show you. Try observing a total eclipse of the sun from the surface of the moon. Or

orbit Earth—or the moon, or Mars—and look down on the celestial body you're circling. Some 20 "guided tours" help steer you through the disc, offering realistic 3-D images and celestial simulations that vividly illustrate everything you can do with the program.

Distant Suns will also take you to far-flung time periods—from 4713 B.C. to A.D. 10,000—and faraway planets to observe the heavens. And the program highlights planetary software's advantage over textbooks—last summer, a version of Distant Suns featuring an animated simulation of Shoemaker-Levy 9's crash into Jupiter hit the market even before the impact occurred. Mandy and I had fun comparing the projected events with photographs of the actual collision; the program came remarkably close to the real thing.

Planetary Taxi is more of a learning game than a research tool, but it was a big hit at my house and is also popular among younger teens. It turns kids into taxi-driving solar explorers; they



RedShift sheds some light on faraway satellites.

must uncover facts about the solar system before they can drop off their passengers, who provide clues about where they want to go. The software presents information as comparative data in charts, photos and video. Tricky missions and wacky sound effects add to the fun.

Galactic fare

Planetary Taxi is also good at demonstrating solar relationships, such as the relative sizes of and distances between the planets. For example, before rookies go out on a real mission, they drive around a scale-model solar system that substitutes an 8-foot balloon for the sun and various fruits and vegetables for the planets. Earth is a cherry tomato, Mercury is a pea and Jupiter pops up as a pumpkin.

These planetary programs helped nurture my daughter's interest in astronomy in ways her textbook couldn't. We recently bought a telescope, and we're planning visits to observatories and planetariums as part of our next vacation. Like the universe itself, Mandy's curiosity knows no bounds. Scintillating software lets her explore space's outer limits with ease, enthusiasm and fun. ●



Richard Feutz, a teacher for more than 20 years, is manager of training and instruction for the Kent (Wash.) School District. He was Washington state's Teacher of the Year in 1989.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the astronomy software mentioned in this article.

Distant Suns

Virtual Reality Labs, (505) 545-5515

\$99.95 (Windows)

\$149.95 (Windows CD-ROM)

Expert Astronomer

Expert Software, (500) 759-2562, (305) 567-9990

\$15 (DOS, Windows)

\$49.95 (Windows CD-ROM)

Planetary Taxi

The Voyager Company, (500) 446-2001, (212) 431-5199

\$39.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM)

RedShift

Maxis, (500) 336-2947, (510) 254-9700

\$64.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM)

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

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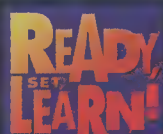
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- ▶ Zany gags and offbeat humor



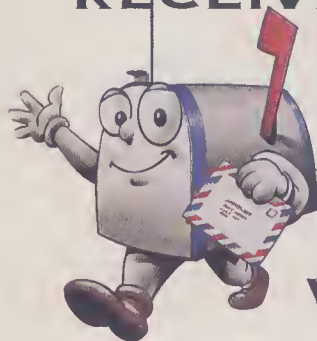
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kid raves

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"I love The Magic School Bus more than he does," insisted his 7-year-old sister, Victoria.

The Magic School Bus first rolled into the hearts of our young experts—the children who test software in the *HomePC Kids' Lab*—last fall as a PBS TV series. So when 5-year-old Brian saw the two Magic School Bus programs in our

The Magic School Bus Explores The Human Body

Ages: 4 to 10

The Magic School Bus Explores The Solar System

Ages: 4 to 10

Scholastic/Microsoft (Science)

lab this month, he couldn't wait to jump into the driver's seat. In Scholastic's *The Magic School Bus Explores the Human Body*, the bus shrinks to microscopic size, rides a cheese snack down a student's gullet and takes Ms. Frizzle's class on a trip inside the human body. In *The Magic School Bus Explores the Solar System*, the bus sprouts wings and flies the kids to outer space.

Each program features more than 200 stunning animated activities, lively music, science experiments, games and intriguing information. For instance, kids on the *Solar System* bus fly to Neptune, where they learn that the large dark spot visible in photographs of the planet is a hurricane that has since disappeared. In the *Human Body* program, they can steer from heart to lungs and play a word game in which they arrange syllables, spoken by Ms. Frizzle, into words. "Br...eeee...thing... Breathing!" said Victoria.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

The programs, which are sold separately, are winners in every way but one. If one child's playtime is interrupted and a second child starts a new game, the first child's game is lost. This makes



by carol ellison

Also reviewed in Kid Raves

- **Flying Colors**
- **Allie's Activity Kit**
- **The Book of Shadowboxes**
- **Memphis Math: Treasure of the Tombs**
- **Kids World**
- **Sound It Out Land 1, 2 and 3**
- **Digby's Adventures**

★ **Reading the stars:** Each program reviewed in this section is rated on a scale of 0 to 4 stars based on how well it sustained the interest of children in our Kids' Lab, their enthusiasm about playing it again, educational content, reference materials, graphics and sound quality, sensitivity to youngsters' skills and whether the kids just plain had fun.

it nearly impossible for kids to take turns; each child has to start from scratch every time he or she plays, or finish the adventure in one sitting, which can take hours. Microsoft says it designed The Magic School Bus this way to encourage kids to return to the program and reinforce its lessons. (The company produces an excellent series of Magic School Bus activity guides for teachers and says it will send the guides to parents who request it.)

The kids in the lab were disappointed to lose their games whenever they relinquished the keyboard to their friends, but in the end it didn't dim their enthusiasm for the program. They were happy to take this bus for a good, long ride.

\$49.95 each (Windows) from Microsoft. (800) 426-9400, (206) 882-8080.

Glittering surprises

Flying Colors

Davidson & Associates

Ages: 8 and up
(Art, creativity)

"It's like Kid Pix!" Genna, 6, exclaimed in delight as she stamped rainbows and castles in the woodland fantasy scene.

"But this is so much better," declared 12-year-old Diana. "It's so cool, and it's really great for girls."

No doubt about it: Kids in our Kids' Lab thought Flying Colors was tops. But Diana's 9-year-old twin brothers, Russ and Doug, both gave it a big thumbs-up, too.



In fact, the school-age children in our Kids' Lab declared it one of their all-time favorites.



Flying Colors lets kids design lustrous scenes on the illustrated backgrounds provided in the program or draw their own. The colors don't actually fly; they shimmer from side to side, varying in tone and intensity as they cross the screen. Blues and greens in a seascape, for instance, cycle to resemble a moving current. Rainbows and planets appear to glow.

The many drawing tools include borders

Reviews are child's play



The holiday season brings an extraordinary number of exciting new children's software releases, so the **Home-PC Kids' Lab** was really buzzing in our most recent tests. The best of the batch had the kids who give us their expert opinions on the latest crop of computer games leaping in the air, shouting "Yes!" and nagging



us to let them play their favorites over and over again.

After watching the kids' expressions over time, it's easy to tell if a program merits a four-star (top) rating, a zero (rock bottom) or something in between.

The kids' enthusiasm for a





program matters most in our decision on a program's star rating, but other factors count, too, including "replayability"

(will kids keep going back to a program or stick it on a shelf after the first couple of plays?), ease of installation and operation, the ability to make learning fun and the overall value.

This month, *Allie's Activity Kit*, *Flying Colors*, *Kids World* and *Memphis Math* all earned four stars. Three of the four set out to spur creativity, and the kids in the lab eagerly rose to the challenge. They carried on about these programs more enthusiastically than about their perennial favorite, *Kid Pix*.

Our thanks to the young experts who helped produce this month's reviews: preschoolers Sammy Colonna, Drew D'Agostino, Jason Marder and Thomas Volpe; kindergartners Joseph Baston, Brian Corrigan, Abbe Goldberg and Megan Race; and students Heather Banninger, Jonathan and Victoria Baston, Chrissie Boehme, Diana, Russell and Douglas Garber, Michael Gibson, Lisa Goldberg, Genna Grande, Jamie Hamer, Brianna Kelley, Jamie Laudage, and Christopher Ralph. Kudos as well to teacher Bonnie Sugai and Ann Erbes, director of CMP Publications' Child Care Center. —C.E.



and text, tailor-made for kids to create their own party invitations, banners and signs.

The kids in our lab couldn't wait to pick new backgrounds and add the most unlikely effects to create humorous and improbable scenarios. Eight-year-old Lisa, for example, created a sea rich with tropical fish, then had fun plunking sharks with open mouths into the schools. Genna, who was watching, had only two words for that: "Yum, yum."

\$49.75 (Windows, Macintosh, Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM) from Davidson & Associates, (800) 545-7677, (310) 793-0600.

Welcome back, Allie

**Allie's
Activity Kit
Opcode
Interactive
Ages: 3 to 6
(Creativity)**

Allie's Playhouse is an all-time favorite among preschoolers in the *HomePC Kids' Lab* (see *Kid Raves*, September 1994). So it's no surprise that our youngest lab regulars thought its sequel, *Allie's Activity Kit*, was out of this world, too.

The kids instantly recognized Allie the Alien (or, "that green guy," as 4-year-old Jason calls him) and dove into the barrel of fun he offers—from puzzles and paints to music and mazes. Kids select the



activity they want from an icon menu at the top of the screen. Spoken instructions let non-readers assert their independence and explore the games without a helping hand from parents or older siblings.

"Look! Look! I'm doing the igloo. Look! Look! I'm doing it," cried Jason as he dragged the last ice block into place on an Eskimo puzzle. Six-year-old Megan preferred the paint box and carefully selected bright reds and blues to liven up her parrot. "I really love the mazes," declared Brian, also 6. And Sammy, 4, would not rest until he'd tried every one of the program's 14 activities.

\$59.95 (Windows CD-ROM) from Opcode Interactive, (800) 557-2633, (+15) 494-1112.

March of rhymes

The Book of Shadowboxes
EduQuest
Ages: 3 to 8
(Reading)

"A is for apple but that's nothing new. There are apricots also and alphabet stew," read Heather, 9. She then instructed her friend Victoria, 7, to "remember apricots, alphabets, airplanes and acorns" so they could find them later.

The Book of Shadowboxes is full of rhymes that kids can read with or without Shadow, the game's main character (a cute little blue blob who resembles the Pillsbury doughboy). The program works through the alphabet, letter-by-letter. A short quiz following each rhyme asks kids to find and click on the objects they just read about. Other games ask them to find objects not mentioned in the rhymes—artichokes, ants and avocados under "A," for instance.

This is the first home software based on IBM's Writing to Read program, one of the first and still one of the best computer reading programs used in schools. It's packed with charm, and our experts returned to play it over and over.

Brian, 6, had so much fun that he was willing to turn his back on other games to play with Shadow. "I want to switch back to this one,"



he kept saying, pointing insistently at the CD-ROM box.

\$39.95 (Windows CD-ROM), \$49.95 with coloring book (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM), \$59.95 with doll (Windows CD-ROM) from EduQuest, (800) 595-5542, (+04) 597-1036.

In fractions? Better play by the rules

Memphis Math:
Treasure of the Tombs
WordPerfect Main Street
Ages: 8 to 14
(Math)

The setting for Memphis Math is not Elvis Presley's hometown but the ancient Egyptian city on the Nile. The program features a mystery designed to help kids master fractions and decimals, two of the trickiest parts of elementary-school math.

The game sends kids on an Indiana Jones-style adventure in search of the lost equations of the Pyra-



mids and the pieces of a sacred scarab that will reveal the riches of the fictional tomb of Tahp Ra-Men. Along the way, they explore the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the pyramids at Giza

and, of course, the Sphinx.

"I want to go to the pyramids first," said Heather, 9. "I love the sphinx," said 12-year-old Diana as she examined a map of Egypt to pick the spot for her first adventure.

At each location, kids move from room to room by solving equations that use fractions and decimals. After they master the problems, they explore the rooms, which are full of artifacts. They can zoom in for a closer look or click for descriptions. The pieces of the scarab are hidden among and inside the artifacts.

The game's various levels are keyed to mathematical relationships, which makes for effective instruction. After completing a series of problems in which fractions were multiplied and divided by whole fractions (i.e.,



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1/1 or 3/3), 9-year-old Russ uncovered a better secret than the scarab's. "Any number times one equals itself," he declared. His sister, Diana, figured it out for herself, too: "I think anyone who does two or three rounds of this would really understand what a whole fraction is."

\$49 (Windows), \$59.95 (Windows CD-ROM) from WordPerfect Main Street, (800) 526-5225, (501) 225-5000.

Screen designs kids will savor

Kids World

Bit Jugglers

Ages: 5 and up
(Creativity)

You decorate your walls with your kids' latest artistic creations, so why not put their winning work on your computer screen?

Kids World lets children design their own screen savers. There are no flying toasters here, just a lot of the fun-filled silliness kids love. They pick a scene, such as a Wild West landscape or a prehistoric tar pit, and plop in animated characters. They can mix and match the themes—put a group of ghosts in a dinosaur museum, for instance—then click on the Go button to see what the screen saver will look like.



As their scene begins to move, strange events occur. Faces pop

in and out of the picture at random; weird sounds and new characters appear. Everything changes with each screen saver your child creates.

"This is so much fun," said Russ, 9, as he and his twin brother, Doug, collaborated on a Western scene. Doug dragged buffalo after buffalo into the scene, herded them together, clicked on Go and watched in



satisfaction as the stampede began.

The kids' masterpieces are easy to save, but if you're wondering just how many screen savers you need, don't sweat it. Our experts frequently blew away their brainstorins to invent new ones.

(Bit Jugglers, the program's manufacturer, says there was a virus in some test copies of the Windows version of Kids World. However, the company promises that no tainted copies will reach consumers, and we experienced no problems during testing.)

\$24.95 (Windows, Macintosh) from Bit Jugglers, (415) 968-3905.

And now, stereo phonics



Sound It Out Land ventures down the road to reading with a bit more fun but less finesse than The Book of Shadowboxes (see review on page 16+). This game series of three CD-ROMs, sold separately, takes kids from associating sounds with letters to recognizing words by sight and, finally, reading simple sentences.

The programs' teaching methods rely on repetition in word games and songs. The Sound It Out Land theme song, for example, plays incessantly: "I can read. I can read. If I sound out the letter, I know I can read." Children who tire of singing along must wait for a song to finish before they can proceed to the next game—the kids in our lab required adult supervision to stay focused on the programs.

Four-year-old Jason quickly tired of the exercise but Abbe, 5, bobbed her head, sang along with Sing-a-Long Sam as he belted out a rhyming tune and sounded out the words in a spelling game. "Ta. Ub. Ta-ub. Tabl!" she exclaimed when the word "tub" popped up on screen.

You have to buy all three Sound It Out Land discs to have a comprehensive phonics program. But it's money well spent if you're willing to put in the time helping your kids

Sound It
Out Land
1, 2 and 3
Conexus
Ages: 4 to 6
(Reading)



along. Parents who are schooling their children at home can order teachers' guides with exercises that supplement the software.

\$35 each (Windows CD-ROM) from Conexus, (800) 545-7677, (619) 268-3380.

This dog chases his tale

**Digby's
Adventures
Sanctuary
Woods**
Ages: 3 to 7
**(Games,
storytelling)**



"I'm going to get a Dalmatian when I get older," confided 8-year-old Lisa as she watched her 5-year-old sister, Abbe, work her way through Digby's Adventures, the story of Digby the one-pound dog.

Abbe followed the reluctant Yorkshire terrier to a dog show, where Digby has to deal with a bad case of stage fright. He declares he'd rather "get my shots again" than face all the people at the show.

"Ugh! Shots!" exclaimed Genna, 6, who was watching. When it was her turn to play, she clicked on a hole in the backyard fence to send Digby on a different diversion. Kids determine the progress and direction of Digby's movement by click-



ing on options in the program's three adventures. The hole in the backyard fence, for instance, dumps Digby into a forest, leaving him to find his own way back home.

But the program's adventures unfold as stories that are told to the children rather than as interactive challenges. Lisa, who longs to own a dog, enjoyed watching the tales, but other children

have come to expect more action.

"It looks like a movie," complained Genna. "You hardly do anything."

\$39.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM) from Sanctuary Woods, (800) 943-3664, (415) 286-6000. •

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

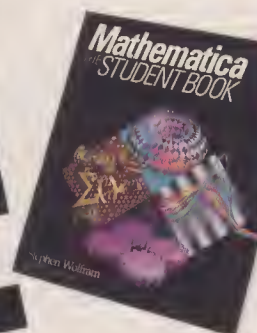
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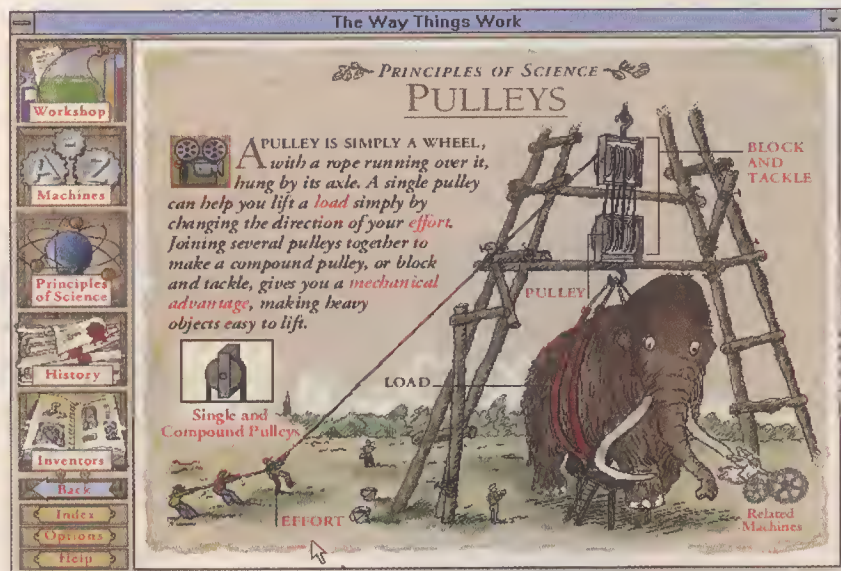
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Most of us don't have a clue why our light bulbs glow, lawn sprinklers spritz or microwave ovens zap; we're just happy that they do. But

See how they run: 200 mechanical mysteries made simple

The Way Things Work
D.K. Multimedia
(Mechanics, science)

every now and then we all get curious, and at those moments, The Way Things Work provides some highly entertaining answers.

The disc is Dorling Kindersley Publishing's terrific multimedia adaptation of artist/author/architect David Macaulay's 1988 best-selling book, which led millions of readers on a tantalizing tour of technology.

The disc reveals the inner workings of 200 common tools and inventions, jazzing up Macaulay's original drawings with on-screen animation, narration and scintillating sound effects. Springs coil and stretch, motors churn and animated demonstrations sometimes go to comic extremes to make their point: Liquid heated in a pan doesn't just boil, for example—it bubbles right over the side.



by charles bowen

What's most delightful is that for all the science you'll learn—and Macaulay doesn't cut corners on his physics—a giddy mix of common sense and good humor will keep you from feeling overwhelmed. The disc's scene-stealing Woolly Mammoth stars in 20 "Mammoth Movies," minute-long animations with whimsical plots that illustrate key principles of science. For example, one warns against trying to milk a mammoth—they're notoriously touchy. But, just in case you insist on trying it next time a mammoth passes through your neighborhood, the program shows you how to lift the charming pachyderm in a barn-size milking machine that wryly demonstrates the power of pulleys.

The disc, which beautifully integrates its text, 1,000 illustrations, 300 animations and 60 minutes of audio, is state-of-the-art multimedia, at once fun and informative for all ages. In the process, it ably demonstrates how a great reference CD-ROM works.

\$99.95 (Windows CD-ROM) from D.K. Multimedia, (800) 225-3362, (212) 213-4800.



Also reviewed in Home Library

- The Story of Civilization
- Skier's Encyclopedia
- Smithsonian's America

★ **Reading the stars:** Each program reviewed in this section is rated on a scale of 0 to 4 stars based on its ease of use, content, reference tools, sound and graphics, and presentation, in terms of both entertainment value and usefulness.

Reeling in the years

The Story of Civilization World Library (History)

Will and Ariel Durant spent 50 years researching and writing their extraordinary 11-volume *Story of Civilization*. The series, published between 1935 and 1975, is a 20th century masterpiece—an exhaustive study spanning 3,500 years, from ancient Egypt to the end of the Napoleonic era. Unfortunately, as great as the Durants' work is, the disc fails to add as much value as it could have to the print version.

Given the scope of the topic, CD-ROM search tools are a dream come true. Instead of making you leaf through 11 thick volumes, the disc locates a word or phrase in seconds, and lets you place up to 99 "bookmarks" for quick reference. Another feature lets you view any volume's table of contents, then effortlessly patches you into the chapter you want to read.

And the disc's 30 minutes of video, a previously unreleased film about the Durants from the early 1970s that poignantly illustrates the love and playfulness the couple shared, is a real treasure.

Still, useful as it is to have any advanced search capability, users are limited by the ways in which they can access the text. For instance, while the series contains thousands of historical profiles on everyone from Alcibiades to Zarathustra, there's no alphabetical index of historical personalities to browse.

But, even given the constraints, this disc will be a welcome addition to any history lover's library—it took the Durants 50 years to write, so

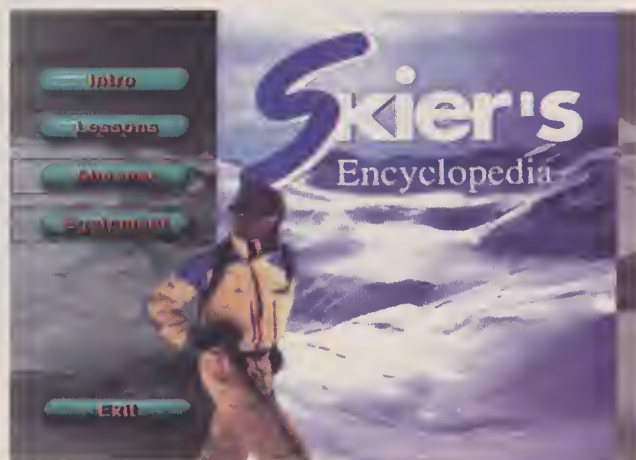
fans will surely forgive the program if it takes a little extra time to find what they want to read.

\$99.95 (DOS CD-ROM, Windows CD-ROM) from World Library, (800) 443-0238, (714) 756-9500.

Alpine and dandy

Skier's Encyclopedia ROMBOY (Sports instruction)

Many CD-ROMs are stingy with their video clips. But then a disc such as Skier's Encyclopedia comes along: It contains so much on-slope action, you may wonder if you somehow tuned in Winter Olympics highlights on your computer.



The disc features video lessons to help intermediate and advanced skiers understand stance, poles, weighting and steering, and offers tips on handling steeps, moguls, powder and ice. Members of the Professional Ski Instructors of America act as your role models on the slopes, providing step-by-step demonstrations supported by text tips. Another section geared toward beginners introduces equipment (from skis to sunglasses) and shows you how that equipment is made through, yes, more video clips.

At the heart of the Encyclopedia, which is updated annually, is the almanac of 400 North American ski resorts. Details in each entry include trail maps (including a handful in 3-D), average snowfall, vertical drop, lift-ticket prices, lodging information and more. It's a handy way to ensure your vacation won't go downhill before you hit the slopes.

\$49.95 (Windows CD-ROM, Macintosh CD-ROM) from ROMBOY, (800) 754-5008, (515) 752-5900.



1/2



Fig. 26 - The Colosseum

Even on CD, still images can move you

**Smithsonian's
America
Creative
Multimedia
(History,
culture)**



Until home computers came along, multimedia often referred to museum exhibits that combined still pictures and sound. Smithsonian's America puts a new twist on this old theme.

The disc traces U.S. history as seen in "multimedia" displays from a Smithsonian exhibition in Japan, with segments on immigration, entertainment, politics, Western expansion, inventions, fashion (including a salute to denim) and U.S. home life.

The CD-ROM contains hundreds of photos, prints, paintings and documents, and includes "artifacts" ranging from George Washington's sword to Dizzy Gillespie's trumpet.

Although the program isn't interactive—you click on a topic, then sit back and watch—the presentations are first-rate. Music ranges from blues and gospel to folk, and the disc adds an eclectic film collection, from a 1907 car parade recorded by Thomas Edison to a 1957 newsreel



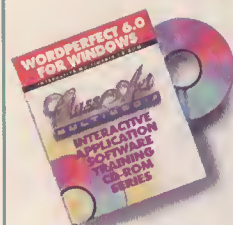
on the "house of tomorrow"—which didn't foresee the PC. But that's OK—you'll enjoy the clip as much for what it says about the past as what it *didn't* say about the future.

\$29.99 (Windows CD-ROM) from Creative Multimedia, (800) 262-7668, (593) 241-4351. •

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

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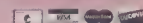
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By Dane Spotts



Absolutely mind blowing!!! I popped a French Learning CD into the Learning Machine™. Immediately I was sucked into a deep, dream-like trance. Weird colors and patterns were created on the insides of my closed eyelids. While in this super-relaxed but hyper-aware state, the special Learning CD began unfolding its magic programming.

A Vacation in 22 Minutes

It was as if a movie were playing inside my head. I could see myself in France having lunch at the Eiffel Tower. The music, the sounds, even the fragrance of summer in Paris. A beautiful woman spoke to me. "Bonjour, mon ami," she said. In an almost unconscious way I began following the dialogue. The mental imagery was so intense I not only understood what was going on, it was like I was there.

Learning at Light Speed

The Learning Machine is more than virtual reality. More than just a cool way to relax after a hard day at work. According to one college professor, "It may be the most powerful learning tool since the invention of the book."

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Beyond virtual reality, the light-sound matrix stimulates your mind and opens your learning centers. Like magic it pours in new information, skills, mental programming, and launches your imagination.

want to show off its other incredible mind expanding powers.

10 Fantastic Mind Journeys

So I'll include the 3-D Mind Sync™ Library, with 10 mind launching programs on 3 CDs. Turn your Learning Machine into a meditation, self-hypnosis, and virtual fantasy computer. You'll get the following titles: Creativity Booster, Quick Energy, Stress Zapper, Mental Tune-Up, Virtual Visualization, Imagination Stimulator, Learning Accelerator, Super Intuition, Lucid Dreaming, and Super Zen States.

A \$150 value, this extensive collection is a super added bonus. But even more exciting is how it can be used for habit control, success conditioning, and eliminating self-sabotaging behavior.

Super Motivation Library

Let's say you want to transform a loser mind-set into a winning one. Or you'd like to quit smoking or lose weight. Pop in an InnerMind™ Programming Disc. The sensory stimulation matrix opens a window into your unconscious mind. Then by infusing your "inner mind" with positive programming, you can rescript negative, self-defeating attitudes. I'm including an awesome 18-title InnerMind Programming Library. From success conditioning to weight control this is another \$150 value.

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Plus in addition to the Language Learning Library, the SuperPhonics, Super Speed Reading, Super Memory, and Super Vocabulary programs, the 3-D Mind Sync Library, and the InnerMind Programming Library (a \$600 combined value), I'm including coupons worth a thousand dollars. These coupons are for hundreds of future Learning CD applications, including software that links your mind directly to a multi-media computer. It's something you absolutely must experience.

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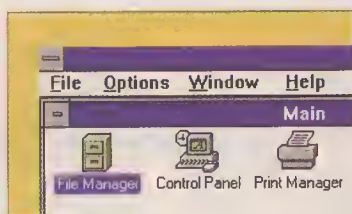
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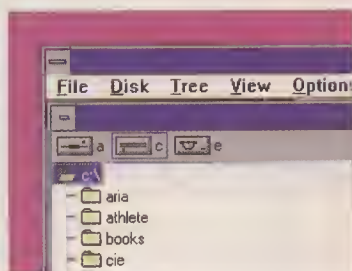
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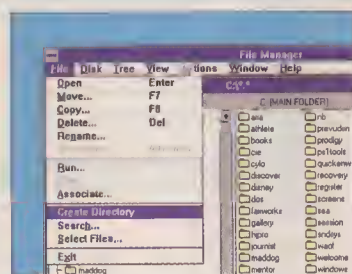
Create a self-cleaning Windows hard drive



- 1 **Open the Main program group and double-click on File Manager.**



- 2 **Click on the C: drive in the gray bar near the top of the screen. Then click on the top folder (C:\).**



- 3 **Go to the File pull-down menu and select "Create Directory."**

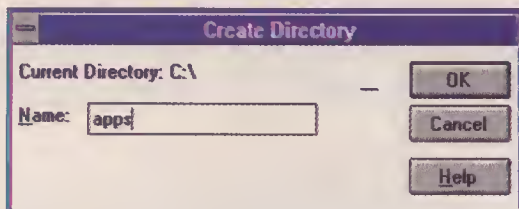
The holidays are over, and your house is finally clean again. The tree's gone, the floors shine, the shelves are dust-free, but there's one thing you may have neglected to check: How tidy is your hard drive?

It's a good question any time of year. Installing programs and everyday use of the PC can scatter files in a maze of directories that are tricky to navigate and back up. And as sure as the sun will rise, sooner or later you will forget to back up a directory of important files the night before you delete the directory—and everything in it.

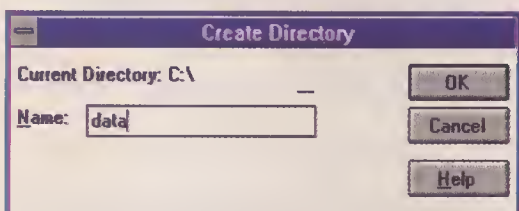
Windows users can easily prevent this from happening by getting organized. Just follow our directions and Windows will put the information stored on your hard drive into three "directory trees." The first tree is a directory called "apps"; you'll install all your programs in this directory. A directory called "data" will store your important information, which you can then easily back up in its entirety. Finally, the "temp" directory will contain transient temporary files, most of which you can delete from your hard drive as soon as you've finished running the programs that created them.

The setup should take only a few minutes. Once you've created the proper framework, your hard drive will stay clean and you won't even break a sweat.

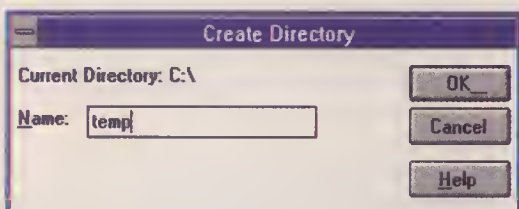
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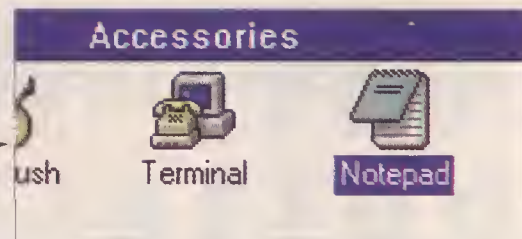
- 4 Type the word "apps" in the window that pops up on screen and hit Enter. This creates the hard drive directory where you will install all your programs from now on. If you had been installing your software in a directory called C:\program, from now on you will install it in C:\apps\program.



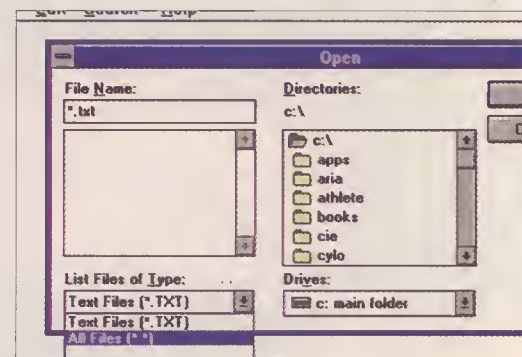
- 5 Select "Create Directory" from the File pull-down menu again, but this time type "data" as the name of the new directory and hit Enter. All the data files you create from now on, including word processing documents and spreadsheets, will be stored in this directory.



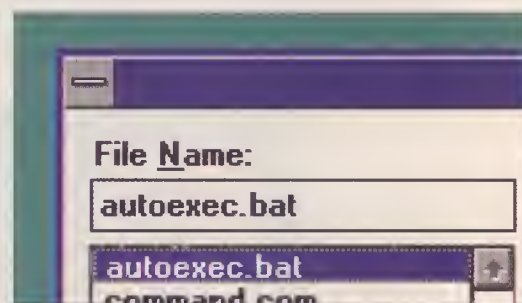
- 6 Select "Create Directory" from the File pull-down menu a third time, type "temp" as the name of the new directory and hit Enter. Your new programs will route all the temporary files they create to this directory. Most programs delete these temporary files when they exit Windows; if they don't, you can delete files in this directory yourself.



- 7 Exit File Manager. Open the Accessories program group and run the program called Notepad. Go to the File pull-down menu and select "Open."



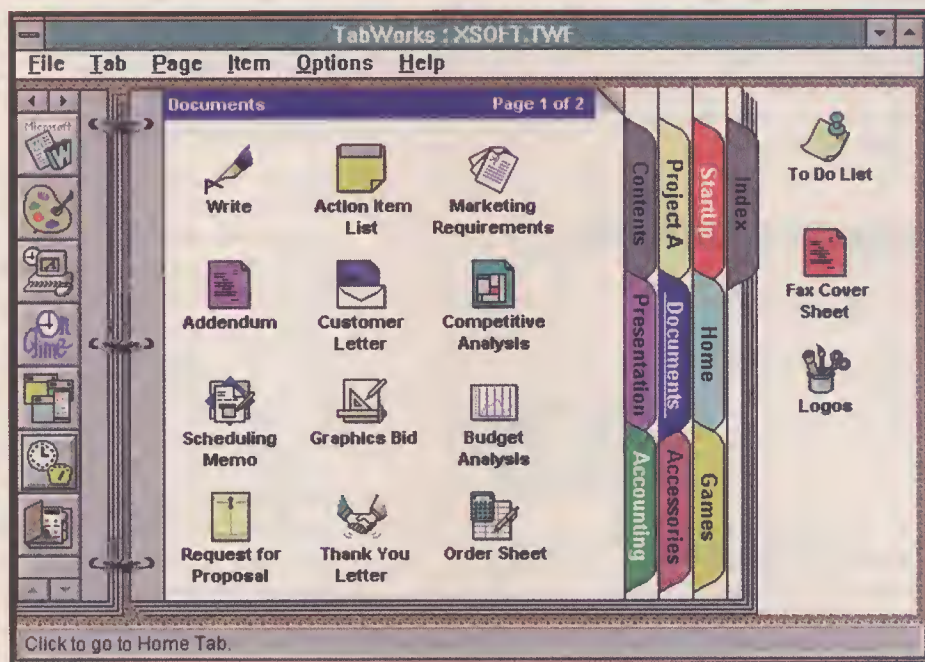
- 8 In the lower left-hand corner of the "Open" window, you'll see a pull-down list labeled List Files of Type. Click the down arrow on this list and select "All Files." Then, in the right-hand column of the "Open" window, click twice on the folder labeled C:\.



- 9 Scroll through the list of files in the left-hand column, select the autoexec.bat file and click on OK.

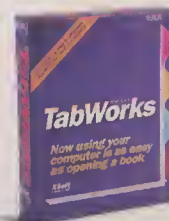
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```

Notepad - AUTOEXEC.BAT
File Edit Search Help
@ECHO OFF
PATH C:\WINDOWS;C:\DOS;C:\PS1TOOLS;C:\
GOTO %config%
:APTIVA
REM RESUME is necessary for Rapid Resume to work properly
C:\PS1TOOLS\RESUME
SET ARIA=A290 I10 D5 T1
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 T1
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
LH C:\DOS\MOUSE

```

- 10** Highlight the line that begins “Set temp.” On many PCs, the “temp” directory is preset to C:\DOS. You need to change this setting to tell your programs to use the “temp” directory you just created.

```

Notepad - AUTOEXEC.BAT
File Edit Search Help
@ECHO OFF
PATH C:\WINDOWS;C:\DOS;C:\PS1TOOLS;C:\
GOTO %config%
:APTIVA
REM RESUME is necessary for Rapid Resume to work properly
C:\PS1TOOLS\RESUME
SET ARIA=A290 I10 D5 T1
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 T1
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
LH C:\DOS\MOUSE

```

- 11** Choose “copy” from the Edit pull-down menu, move your cursor to the beginning of the line under “set temp” and paste in the line. You now have two “set temp” lines, one after another.

```

Notepad - AUTOEXEC.BAT
File Edit Search Help
@ECHO OFF
PATH C:\WINDOWS;C:\DOS;C:\PS1TOOLS;C:\
GOTO %config%
:APTIVA
REM RESUME is necessary for Rapid Resume to work properly
C:\PS1TOOLS\RESUME
SET ARIA=A290 I10 D5 T1
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 T1
REM SET TEMP=C:\DOS
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
LH C:\DOS\MOUSE

```

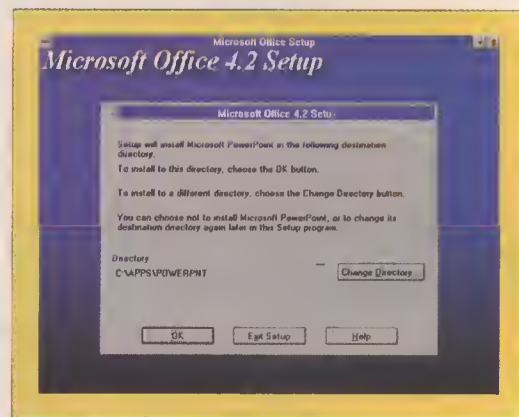
- 12** Type “rem” and a space in front of the first “set temp” line. This tells DOS to ignore the line but leaves it in the file in case you need to refer to it later.

```

Notepad
File Edit Search Help
@ECHO OFF
PATH C:\WINDOWS;C:\DOS;C:\PS1TOOLS;C:\
GOTO %config%
:APTIVA
REM RESUME is necessary for Rapid Resume to work properly
C:\PS1TOOLS\RESUME
SET ARIA=A290 I10 D5 T1
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 T1
REM SET TEMP=C:\DOS
SET TEMP=C:\TEMP
SET TMP=C:\TEMP
LH C:\DOS\MOUSE

```

- 13** Go to the second “set temp” line and change C:\DOS to C:\temp. Add a line just below it that reads: “set tmp=C:\temp.” Some programs refer to the temporary directory as “tmp” instead of “temp”; adding this line ensures that you’re covered if this is the case. Go to the File pull-down menu and select “save” to store the modified auto-exec.bat file on your hard drive. Exit Notepad and Windows, then reboot your computer. From now on, your programs will save their temporary files in C:\temp.



- 14** When you install new software, the setup or installation program usually creates a new directory for that software; instruct the software’s setup or installation program to install under the C:\apps directory.

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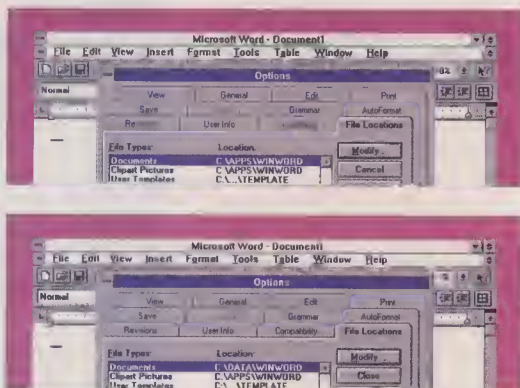
1994 Dvorak PC Telecommunications Excellence Award For Outstanding Internet Front-End



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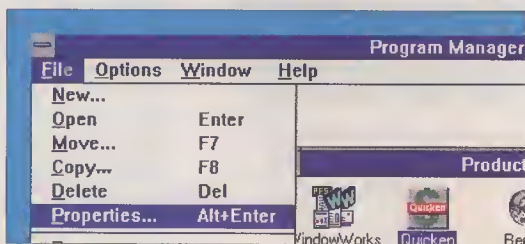
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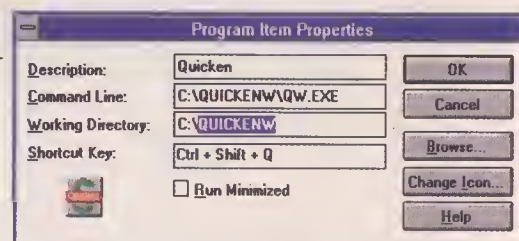


- 15** For software already installed on your hard drive, check the program's manual to find the Setup, Options or Customize screen and locate the program's data files. In our example (see top photo), the data files are under the C:\apps directory (where we installed the program). You will need to create a separate directory for your program's data.

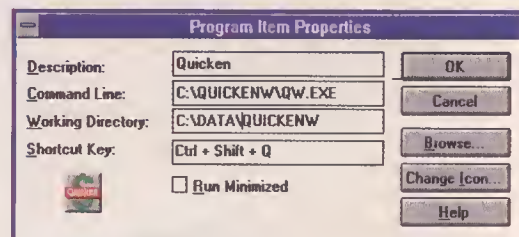
Return to File Manager and create a directory under C:\data for the program's data files. If the program is Microsoft Word, for example, create the directory C:\data\winword for all your Word files. Go to the Setup screen and change lines that refer to the location of data files or documents to refer to C:\data\winword. In our example (see second photo above), we changed "apps" to "data" in the directory name. Now, anytime you open or save files in that program, it will automatically go to the directory you just named.



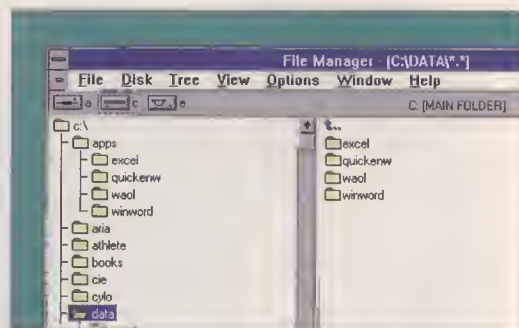
- 16** If there is no screen within a program that lets you change the data directory, exit it and go to Windows' Program Manager. Select the program by clicking once on its icon. From Program Manager's File pull-down menu, select "Properties."



- 17** The box labeled "Working Directory" should list the directory under which the program is installed.



- 18** To put data in a separate data directory for the program, change the name of the directory in the "Working Directory" box from the one in which the application is installed to a new directory under C:\data. Click on OK.



- 19** Now, your hard drive is in order. Some words to the wise: Don't move your existing application files to directories under C:\apps. Installation programs put files in different directories on your hard disk, and the programs expect the files to be where they left them. Your best bet is to reinstall the programs and then, when you're sure the new installations work, delete the old directories. •

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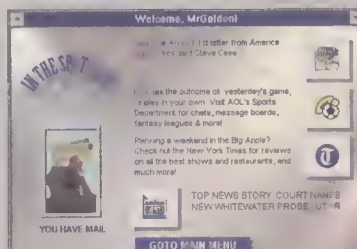
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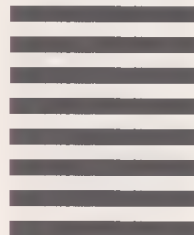
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Software becomes a collector's item

Somewhere in my attic sits a dusty cardboard box that just may hold a fortune. I've kept it around since 1960, when my best friend, Eddy, and I were in the fourth grade. Eddy's dad owned a ham-

My collection now lies undisturbed in storage. Does it include some long-forgotten rare coin that could make me a mint? From what I remember of its highlights, probably not. On the other hand, 35 years could not have hurt its market value. Truth is, the more years that separate me from my childhood memories, the less I know about what's in my collection.

If today's software had been around back then, it would be a different story. PCs have revolutionized the way collectors keep track of coins, stamps, sports trading cards and just



burger joint, which seemed like the coolest thing in the world to the two of us, and not just because we could grab free burgers.

Eddy and I collected coins. Two or three times a week, Eddy's dad brought home several bags of loose change for us to sort, count and roll. Sifting through thousands of coins gave us the opportunity to build impressive collections of Lincoln pennies, buffalo nickels and Mercury dimes...at face value.

If tracking all those stamps, coins and cards is too nerve-racking, software keeps you cool and collected.

about any other precious holdings. Software records every item in your inventory, instantly calculates the current value of your collection, and allows you to analyze what you've got—and need—in a variety of lists and reports on screen or in print.

The seven programs we describe below assign values to collectibles, but prices in collectors' markets change rapidly, so the software lets you alter the information easily. For less than \$20, you can easily apply more current values to your collection by modem or floppy disk updates.

Just common cents?

HobbySoft Coin Keeper, for DOS, Windows and Macintosh, contains the current market value of every U.S. coin ever minted—more than 2,500 in all—for 12 grades (i.e., the coins' physical condition). Additional disks with the values of Canadian and commemorative coins cost about \$20 each, and you can get yearly market-value updates for around \$10.

by don vanderwort

Coin Keeper displays a series of text screens. The Main Menu offers 11 options, from maintaining files to printing reports. Go to the Coin File Maintenance screen to create a new record for an individual coin or to change or delete existing files. You can identify coins by denomination, year, mint location, quantity and condition. There's also space for notes about your purchase or sale of a coin and where you store it. Some fields on this screen fill in

database has some 3,100 items—all the stamps listed in Scott's National Album, the field's standard reference guide. The program identifies stamps by their Scott catalog number, which you must use to select and log in your entries. You can buy add-on versions for Canada, the United Nations, Great Britain, Germany, Israel and U.S. plate blocks (sheets of four or more stamps) for about \$20 each.

Stamp Keeper lists values for

feature to identify cards by the manufacturer's number (printed on the card) or the player's last name. If you want to look up cards by number, enter the year, sport and manufacturer (the latter two can be selected from pop-up lists). A window presents the six cards that have numbers closest to the one you want.

To look up cards by the player's last name, simply type in the name. As you do this, cards that

Stamp Keeper lists values for 3,100 U.S. stamps; trading card collectors find 170,000 entries in *All-Star Collection Manager*.

automatically: day and date, record number, a brief description (say, "Jefferson nickel"), individual value and total value of the coins described in a set of records.

Five options appear at the bottom of the File Maintenance screen: Add (add a coin to the file); Change (modify existing information); Delete (erase a record); Inquire (examine a record); and Main Menu (return to the home screen).

To let you quickly enter data on a block of similar coins, Coin Keeper provides a Group Entry function. Say you have Washington quarters; simply type in the denomination and the years of the coins in your collection. The software creates separate records for each coin; you can then delete or modify any file.

The program prints several types of reports. Value Report delivers an itemized list of your collection. Collection Summary Report creates a one-page brief of your collection's overall value and will calculate a running total of profit or loss. For a list of the coins you've sold, choose Coins Sold Report, which will also display your profit or loss. And for a list of coins you need to complete a collection, select Want List, which scans your records and shows you what's missing. Coin Keeper also has a feature that lets you generate any type of report you dream up.

Giving postage its due

HobbySoft Stamp Keeper, for DOS, Windows and Macintosh, has the same recording and reporting functions as Coin Keeper. Its U.S. stamp

database has some 3,100 items—all the stamps listed in Scott's National Album, the field's standard reference guide. The program identifies stamps by their Scott catalog number, which you must use to select and log in your entries. You can buy add-on versions for Canada, the United Nations, Great Britain, Germany, Israel and U.S. plate blocks (sheets of four or more stamps) for about \$20 each.

Another stamp collector's package, called Stamps, uses a structure and database similar to Stamp Keeper's, but it's available only for DOS and contains fewer features. Stamps, for example, doesn't have the Reporter print option and its Comment field holds only 13 characters; Stamp Keeper puts no limit on the notes you can make.

Calling all cards

All-Star Collection Manager, for DOS, keeps track of all your trading cards—baseball, basketball, football and hockey—and makes it easy to add new information. The software displays values for more than 170,000 cards; monthly updates are available for about \$5 each.

The program is jam-packed with facts and figures. It covers all major manufacturers' baseball and football cards since 1948, hockey cards since '51 and basketball cards since '57. And Collection Manager isn't limited to its initial database—you can store information about any other cards you want.

Choose the Update Collection

match the name appear in the scrollable window. If you press Enter when the name box is blank, a pop-up window listing all the players from your chosen year and sport helps you locate the athlete you're looking for.

After you find your card, hit Enter to call up an Update Inventory screen. Here, you can type in the date you purchased the card, its physical condition and the price you paid. The program automatically fills in the current date and the book value of the card.

All-Star Collection Manager uses your keyboard's function keys to help you navigate the program and enter information more quickly. F1 offers help; F4 lets you change sports—from baseball to basketball.

	Mint	NiMint	Excel
Value	25.00	12.50	6.25
Quantity	0	0	0
Total \$	0.00	0.00	0.00

What's a card worth? Ask All-Star Collection Manager.

for example; F6 adds a selected card to a Want List; F7 prints the Want List; and F8 places a Do Not Update flag on a card (if you install a disk with updated values, that listing won't change).

HobbySoft Sport Card Organizer Deluxe, for Macintosh and DOS (a Windows version is due early this year), is almost identical to Coin Keeper and Stamp Keeper.

The Card Collector, for DOS and Windows, contains information on more than 80,000 baseball cards from 1948 to 1994. For \$60, you'll receive 12 monthly value updates: four quarterly updates cost \$24, and a single update is \$6. (Databases are also available for hockey, football and basketball cards for about \$20 each.)

The program uses pull-down menus. Choose the Open Card Set menu to go to the Card Set screen. Fill in the manufacturer (either type in the name or scroll through a list to select one), the sport, the year and the type of card. The program will list the first card in the manufacturer's set for that year—for example, "Card No. 1, Boston Red Sox, Roger Clemens." Below this information is the book value of the card in mint, near-mint or excellent condition. You can update the numbers as needed. Across the bottom of the screen, you'll see the total value for all the cards you own in the set.

Best of all, the pull-down menus let you switch in a flash from one card set to another—say, from your Bowman 1993s to your Front Row 1992s. This feature makes browsing a breeze.

In the lower right-hand corner of the Card Set screen, you'll find helpful buttons that will mark a given card: Special (for any reason you choose); No Update (to prevent an update disk from changing the card's listed value); and Want (to add the card to a wish list). The program automatically flags other characteristics, such as 1st Card (the first card in a set); Rookie (a card for a first-year player); Inc. [+] (the value of the card increased at the last update); or Dec. [-] (the value decreased). A bright green dollar sign appears if a particular card has an unusually high value.

Playing the field

If you're looking for a program that can organize virtually any type of collection—from Barbie dolls to

books to wine—consider Organize! Your Collection (available for DOS and Windows). The open database offers 22 templates for collectors of photographs and slides, comic books, tokens, guns and more.

Suppose you collect jazz LPs. The program offers three formats in its CDs/Tapes & Records template: pop/rock, classical and jazz. Choose jazz, and the program presents a main screen for cataloging your record collection by title, artist(s), catalog number, value, vocals and so forth. You can eliminate or modify any of the categories to suit your preferences.

If the program doesn't have the template you need, it's easy to create one of your own. All information can be cross-referenced, and you can search by any characteristic in your template. You can also create just about any type of printed report, from mailing labels (one of the templates is for mailing lists—that is, collections of names and addresses) to full-page alphabetical inventories.



Open templates are a catch-all for any collection.

With the right computer software, collectors can spend less time tracking down their collectibles and more time enjoying them. And now I finally have a reason to dig out that dusty box in my attic and check out what's inside. I just hope there's enough value in there to pay for a burger at 1995 prices. ●

Don Vandervort writes home-improvement books and articles from his office in La Cañada, Calif. His latest book, How Your House Works, is scheduled to be published by Ballantine this summer.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the collector's software mentioned in this article.

All-Star Collection Manager

Taurus Technologies, (800) 828-7879, (305) 564-2080
\$59.95 (DOS)

The Card Collector

AbleSoft, (800) 545-9009, (504) 595-5454
\$49.95 with baseball data (DOS, Windows)

HobbySoft Coin Keeper

HobbySoft Stamp Keeper

HobbySoft Sport Card Organizer Deluxe

Ninga Software, (800) 656-4642, (403) 283-2772
\$69.95 (DOS, Windows, Macintosh; Sport Card Organizer Macintosh version scheduled for release in early '95)

Stamps

Dynacomp, (800) 828-6772, (716) 265-4040
\$50 (DOS)

Organize! Your Collection

PSG-HomeCraft, (503) 692-3732
\$59.95 (DOS, Windows)

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All prices are suggested or estimated retail.

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Want a stock tip? Your computer's got its share

a keen eye—and the right information—to identify stocks that will gain in value.

But if you think only big brokerage houses have the resources to pinpoint hot stocks, think again.

Software programs and on-line services can help you quickly evaluate thousands of stocks, and tip you off

to a surefire buy before other investors catch on. Computer-based stock screeners sort information on earnings, profits, cash on hand and stock fluctuations for some 10,000 companies traded on NASDAQ, the New York Stock Exchange and the American Stock Exchange.

If you're going to make investment decisions, it helps to know how the stock market works and get a sense of its trends. Picking a stock is a skill that's equal parts research and instinct. Say you know restaurant stocks have slumped, but you keep hearing friends lament how tired they are of cooking at home. Could restaurant chains be ripe for a comeback? A screening program or on-line service instantly delivers a list of restaurant companies that have increased revenue and earnings in the past three years.

Stock screening tools for home

PCs differ in the number of stocks they list, the predefined variables (or indicators) they'll search for, such as annual sales, and the kinds of reports they generate. At the least, screening software should offer data about conditions in the

industry in which a company does business as well as the company itself, including a balance sheet, dividends, stock prices, earnings history and a way to contact the company.

If you subscribe to a commercial or specialized on-line service, you can see up-to-the-minute information, but there may be a price—

line services offer robust screening tools, general on-line services' screening may be less comprehensive. Some software packages, meanwhile, offer low introductory fees, but their quarterly disk updates may contain dated information, and weekly updates can cost as much as \$1,000 a year.

Here's a look at some disks and on-line services specifically set up to help home computer owners take stock of the market.

Telescan ProSearch

This on-line service presents would-be investors with more than 200 screening variables and the



CompuServe, for one, charges a \$15 hourly stock screening fee on top of its monthly connection fees. And while several specialized on-

most comprehensive categorization of industry groups. For instance, it shows 12 categories of oil and gas companies, such as U.S. drillers, refiners and more. You may want to screen for the industry group

by saul fieldman

Active Companies - Stocks									
BEER & AM			BIG ROCK BREWERY			MANUFACTURING FOOD			
Recent Pri	\$	13.75	TTM PE	46.54	Shares	4.4			
5 HI	\$	16.00	Div Yld %		Market Cap	60.5			
Week Lo	\$	5.25	P/E Sales	4.40	Inst Hold %	1.79			
Book Value	\$	1.50	P/B Ratio	9.17	Closely Held %				
FYE Change					Partial Year 1992				
FYE March									
SELECTED RATIOS									
Earnings Yield	2.15		Free Cash Flow \$	0.18					
Dividend Payout			FCF/Price %	1.32					
Return on Revenue	9.63		LTB/Capitalization	16.45					
Return on Equity	19.70		Working Capital	1.2					
Value of ROE (RUE PE)	0.42		Current Ratio	2.58					
Return on Invest	16.46		Quick Ratio	1.63					
Return on Assets	14.94		Net CA per Sh / Pr	(0.00)					
Inventory Turns	19.29								
Company as of 1/93 Ranked by ROE									
1st 10: F1: Pepsi F2: Nest F3: Mod F4: Ford F5: Ford F6: Ford F7: Fyfe F8: Nuc F9: SBC F10: HFI									

U.S. Equities on Floppy hops from stock screenings to profiles covering market performance.

that shows the greatest increase in sales and then look for that sector's hot companies.

Reports are presented logically. Once you find a stock, Telescan can draw a stock price chart for almost any stretch of time. It can also provide the latest company news, in-depth reports, and access to other databases, including analysts' predictions of future earnings.

Stock Investor

With about 8,100 companies in its list, the Stock Investor disk is thorough, although its screens are hard to read. If you can get past that, you'll appreciate its varied information, such as analysts' estimates of stocks' future performance, details on buying shares directly from a company and full business addresses.

Stock Investor has no pre-designed variables; since you screen stocks from scratch, you need a sense of what information you want to search for before you start. You probably won't use all 100-plus slices of company data Stock In-

vestor can supply; you can generate reports that include only the data you want to see.

Reuters Money Network

This financial on-line service offers both stock screening and portfolio management. The service's database of 5,200 stocks comes on a

disk, so you don't need to be on-line to screen them. Quarterly updates are delivered on-line. (The software that lets you use the service is also included in WealthBuilder, a \$109.95 investment management program; see Financial Adviser in the August 1994 issue of *HomePC*.)

Stock screening results in a list that ranks the stocks matching your filter—but you can use only one variable at a time (17 are available to choose from). Reuters then delivers three pages of facts and figures on the stocks that interest you, including easy-to-read charts (but no company description or address). You can also get current stock quotes on-line and, for \$4.95, a full research report on a stock.

U.S. Equities on Floppy

The U.S. Equities disk takes a sophisticated approach to stock

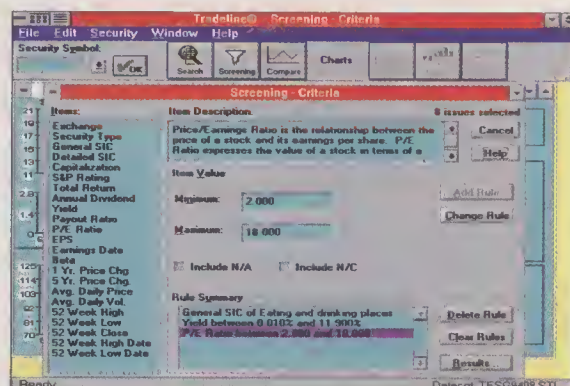
screening, yet it won't confuse a beginner. The software presents more than 200 variables for 6,140 stocks and lets you easily add your own search criteria.

Even before you screen stocks, you can review profiles that list basic information about market performance (stock price, dividends, book value, etc.) as well as price charts, a thorough description of the business, and recent developments, such as mergers and dividend increases. You can also generate custom data reports that rank stocks by financial criteria you choose.

If you'd rather not pay for specialized stock screening, software or on-line services you may already use can help a little, too.

Quicken Deluxe 4 for Windows

If you're just getting your feet wet in the market, the superb design in this Deluxe version of the Quicken personal finance program makes it



Quicken Deluxe 4 for Windows screens more than 6,000 stocks for 23 predetermined criteria.

Hunting for *hot stocks*? Use these tips and you'll *get warmer*

Ready to hunt for the stock that will make you rich? We can't promise you'll find it, but we can offer these tips:

- To find a stock that has a reasonable chance of paying off in the future, screen for companies that have increased their dividend payments in each of

the previous three years.

- Look for growth companies—businesses that consistently make more money every year. Use increased earnings per share in each of the past five years as one screening variable.

- Look for companies sitting on cash reserves

representing more than half their share price. Cash-laden companies may be good takeover candidates, and that's good for your pocketbook.

- Screen for stocks in industries you know. You'll have a better sense of activity in a field you work in or study. —S.F.

a good place to start, but even novices will outgrow it quickly. The package screens more than 6,000 stocks, but only for 23 predefined variables. A stock's history and current earnings per share are available, but screening produces only a list of stocks that meet your criteria, with no sense of how they measure up to each other. Clicking on a stock gives more information; for example, you can generate charts comparing its price fluctuations with those of other stocks.

You can also track a stock's price performance before you buy any shares by adding the stock to the program's theoretical portfolio. Quicken's stock price update service delivers new information on a disk, either quarterly (\$59.95 per year) or monthly (\$119.95 per year).

CompuServe

Typing Go Coscreen takes you to the CompuServe screening service, which tracks 11,500 stocks, but not very well. There are 38 predefined variables, but some, such as a company's ZIP code, are useless.

The screening report shows companies that meet your criteria and their revenues, stock prices and dividend yield. You'll have to pay extra for more detailed information (from \$5 to \$42) from other CompuServe services, such as Standard & Poor's.

Prodigy

Prodigy's Strategic Investor lists only 5,200 stocks but offers detailed company profiles at no additional charge. You can't modify screening variables in the Stock Hunter module, which means everyone gets the same results you do, so this isn't the place to hunt for exclusives. The Stock Analyst module lets you modify your search criteria, but only for four variables. When you see the stocks that meet your parameters, click on the name to see a brief description of the company's business, current stock price and performance charts.

Prodigy promises revamped stock screening with its next version (scheduled for later this year); its features will include 7,000 stocks and more complete compa-

Company Name	as of 10/29	Price	Yield	Growth	P/E
NAVISTAL CO	10.00	8.60	80.60	10.40	
TRC LABORA	7.94	8.00	142.70	13.70	
BACK BAY RESTAURANT GROUP	9.25	8.00	49.10	15.90	
D CHARLEYS	10.50	8.00	54.00	10.00	
TRAP CORP	25.00	8.00	45.40	10.50	

Prodigy plans to enhance its stock search capabilities later this year.

ny reports, including information on earnings estimates.

No matter how you use your computer to identify hot stocks, you can deduct the costs of the

screening software and on-line services if investments provide you with income and you itemize deductions on your tax return.

One last bit of advice: CompuServe and Prodigy let you buy stocks via modem from discount brokers, but don't be impulsive. If you see a stock you like, write the company and ask for its annual report, proxy statement (which tells you, for instance, the major shareholders and executives' salaries) and Form 10-K, which provides details on business activities and finances. It's a smart, final step in picking the best stock buys. ●

Saul Feldman is a San Francisco-based journalist and investor.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the stock screening software and on-line services mentioned in this article.

CompuServe

(800) 524-3355, (614) 457-5600

\$8.95 monthly membership fee; \$15 per hour screening fee (DOS, Windows, Macintosh)

Prodigy

(800) 776-3449

\$9.95 monthly membership fee includes five free hours (\$2.95 per hour thereafter); \$14.95 per month screening fee (DOS, Windows, Macintosh)

Quicken Deluxe 4 for Windows

Intuit, (800) 624-5742, (415) 322-0573

\$59.95; \$6.95 one-time database update; \$59.95 per year for quarterly updates; \$119.95 per year for monthly updates (Windows)

Reuters Money Network

Reality Technologies, (800) 521-2475, (215) 277-7600

\$24.95; \$9.95 monthly subscription fee; \$8 for monthly updates (DOS, Windows)

Stock Investor

American Association of Individual Investors, (312) 250-0170

\$150 for non-members, including quarterly database updates (includes one-year membership); \$99 for current members, including quarterly database updates (DOS)

Telescan ProSearch

Telescan, (800) 324-5246, (713) 952-1060

\$295; \$15 to \$499 monthly billing plans (DOS)

U.S. Equities on Floppy

Morningstar, (800) 576-5005, (312) 696-6000

\$55; \$995 per year for weekly database updates, \$295 per year for monthly updates, \$145 per year for quarterly updates (DOS)

Note: Before you buy any software, check your computer owner's manual to determine operating system, microprocessor, memory and disk space. Then read the software box or consult a salesperson to be sure your computer and the program are compatible. All software prices are suggested or estimated retail.

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Next, *Letters: Capital & Small* makes learning the alphabet fun. Children pick apples from a tree with Animal™, go fishing with Fozzie™ and explore the zoo with Miss Piggy™.

And to finish, *Beginning Sounds: Phonics* teaches important beginning consonant sounds. Plus, children don't have to guess what an object is. Click on the bottle, celery or gorilla to hear their names.



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IN TIMES LIKE THESE, WE SHOULD ALL TIGHTEN OUR BELTS.



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personal productivity working at home

TOOLS FOR GETTING THE JOB DONE

So, you've finally set up your home office. The printer's on the rug where your dog used to curl up, the fax machine is perched on your desk where your clock and calendar used to be, and your brand-

among everyday computer gear. Printers, copiers and fax machines all make marks on paper; fax/modems and fax machines send data over phone lines; and copiers and fax machines have built-in scanners to reproduce images. A multifunction device is, essentially, a printer with the guts of a fax machine, including a scanner for copying, scanning or both. Each

computer—for example, they include software to tie together their key functions. Prices range from \$1,500 to \$1,800 at computer specialty stores.

Mark Kuipers, a direct-marketing consultant in Los Altos, Calif., finds an all-in-one product comes in handy even though he already has a separate printer. Kuipers' home-based business, MAK Direct,

Printer? Fax? Copier? Scanner? One box fits all

new copier fits on the tabletop now that you've dumped your files on the floor. There's just one problem: With all these machines taking up space, where do you fit in?

You can make room for yourself—and your dog—by replacing these three machines with just one that prints, faxes, copies and sometimes more. Even if you've got room to stretch out, these versatile devices can help. If you are setting up your first home office from scratch, or you're simply shopping for a new printer or fax machine, these units fill several office needs at once without busting your budget. Some all-in-one products, such as the Panasonic KX-SP100, sell for around \$700—about what you'd pay for a plain-paper fax machine and just a little more than some basic, low-priced laser printers.

An all-in-one product's design takes advantage of the similarities

function operates just as it would in a stand-alone product.

There are two major classes of all-in-one products. The first type connects to your computer only

processes hundreds of faxes each week, and when he needed a new fax machine he chose the OfficeJet. While Kuipers uses the unit mostly for faxing, he connects it to his laptop computer for printing, which spares him the wrestling



for printing, but also faxes and copies documents. Devices in this category, such as the KX-SP100, Hewlett-Packard's OfficeJet and Canon's Faxphone B160, sell for \$700 to \$900 at computer stores. The second, more expensive group of machines, such as Okidata's Doc-It 3000 and QMS's 2001 Knowledge System, add scanning to their print/fax/copy functions and work more closely with your

match with cables that would begin every time he'd disconnect his laser printer from his desktop PC to use it with the portable.

One of the big advantages of all-in-one units is that the components work together smoothly. Say you have to print an important report but a customer plans to fax you a signed contract "sometime between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m." All-in-one products typically can print and receive faxes at the same time, so you don't have to

by russell letson

worry that your client will hear busy signals if she calls while you're churning out that report.

Richard Glidewell, an investment manager and president of Glidewell Economics in Westminster, Mass., provides a perfect example of that smooth management. When he's working at home, news service updates are routed from his backyard satellite dish to a PC hooked up to a Faxphone B160, which prints them as they arrive. "If a fax comes in while I'm printing a news story, the Faxphone answers the call, puts the fax into memory and prints it when the printer is free," he says.

What's the trade-off?

Of course, the convenience of having several office machines in one box requires some trade-offs. The number-one fear for home workers is that a breakdown in one function may temporarily put the office out of commission. So before you buy, ask your computer dealer

about an instant-exchange policy, in which the manufacturer promises to replace a malfunctioning machine within one business day.

One other compromise you will have to make with an all-in-one printer/fax/copier is the copier's quality. Copy resolution for these units may be as low as 200 dots per inch (dpi), far below the standard of a full-size or desktop copier. It's certainly adequate, however, if all you typically use a copier for is duplicating invoices and memos.

All of the units, however, offer high-quality printing, the feature that home workers typically use most. You'll find either ink jet printing or—on the KX-SP100,



Hewlett-Packard's OfficeJet fax/copier/printer.

Doc-It and Knowledge System units—laser quality. However, Macintosh owners who wish to enjoy the excellent print quality of some of the printer/fax/copier models will have to buy an addi-

Not *all-in-one*, but a few credible *simulations*

Abracadabra! In just a few minutes and for a few dollars, you can turn an everyday piece of hardware into

an all-in-one device—just don't expect the same quality you'd get with a true multifunction product.

The Missing

Link from Brother International (\$39 estimated price, 800-284-4329) is a device that connects some Brother fax machines to a Windows PC and lets them take on printing, copying and scanning jobs. But scanning and copying by a fax machine is only a convenience—with a typical top resolution of 200 dots per inch (dpi), scans and

copies probably won't pass muster for your most sensitive projects.

More important, a thermal fax machine is not a good substitute for a printer because of that slippery fax paper. Some compatible laser-based Brother fax machines—those in the 2400, 2500 and 3500 series—use plain paper and make better emergency backup printers.

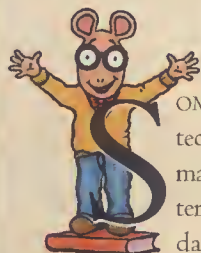
Another gadget for fax machines is the FaxConverter from Trio Information Systems (919-846-4990), included with Trio's \$129 DataFax software. Plug this box in between a modem and any fax machine, and you can imitate scanning by using the fax

software to send images from the fax machine to a computer file. It also lets you print from your fax. But again, you'll get low-quality scans and prints.

Finally, software that ties together the devices you already have simulates multifunctionality by allowing central management of separate office machines. The \$249 E-Quip software from Alacrity Systems (908-813-2400), for example, gathers the functions of your existing scanner, fax/modem and printer under one set of Windows control programs. Alacrity's \$599 E-Quip+ Office-in-a-Box includes a scanner and fax/modem, as well as the E-Quip software. —R.L.



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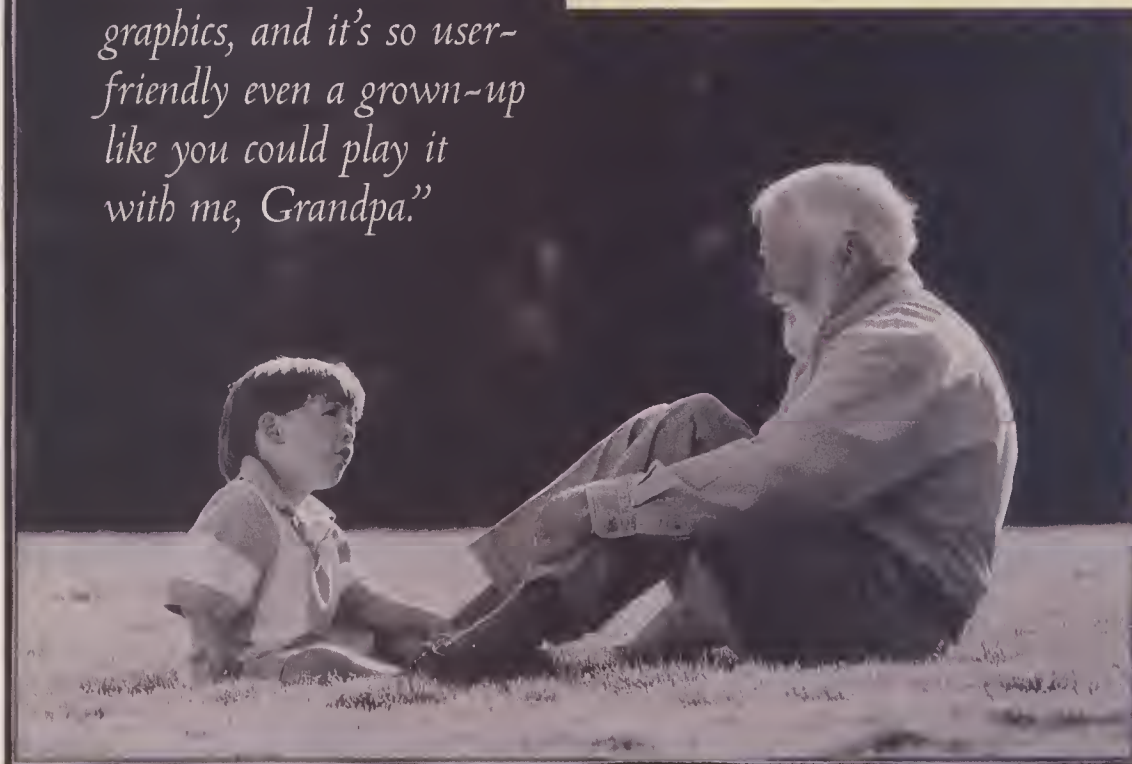
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Panasonic's KX-SP100 combines a laser printer, fax and copier.

tional product such as PowerPrint, which contains driver software for communicating with the printer and a connecting cable. DOS and Windows users who pick a print/fax/copy-only machine can print after installing the product's included driver software.

There's also a trade-off on the fax side. Printer/fax/copiers alone can't fax, say, word processing files directly from the computer, so you must print the document first and then feed it into the fax scanner. If your computer has a fax/modem, however, this isn't as much of a concern, because you'll still be able to use it to fax any files directly from the screen. In addition, the all-in-one device will let you receive faxes after normal business hours without leaving the computer on.

Some printer/fax/copiers also lack important features found on dedicated fax machines, such as a dialing keypad. The KX-SP100, for example, has to be plugged into a phone if you want to dial out to send a fax. And no keypad means no programmable functions. Of the three printer/fax/copiers mentioned here, the Faxphone B160 comes closest to meeting serious faxing needs; it has a handset and a large electronic dialing directory for commonly used numbers, as well as lots of programmability, including a way to delay transmissions.

If you're willing to spend more, however, you'll get more flexibili-

ty. Machines such as the Doc-It and Knowledge System units are strictly for PCs. The Doc-It's brains and fax functions are located on a board that you install inside a PC; a special cable connects the board with the unit for printing, scanning and copying. The Knowledge System's printer, scanner and copier hardware connects to the PC through a parallel port. You can use your internal fax/modem or buy the Knowledge System with an optional fax board to install in your PC.

Although sophisticated all-in-one products such as the Doc-It and Knowledge System models lack Mac connectivity, they offer PC users advanced benefits. These products deliver high-quality photocopies, and you get the extra value of a built-in scanner. True, the scanners in these machines aren't versatile—they use a sheet-fed design (you feed paper in one sheet at a time) and only reproduce shades of gray (for more information about scanners, see story on page 113). But they are suitable for most common home-office needs, such as scanning in a purchase order form.

The more sophisticated all-in-one products also offer you more

fax choices. Besides faxing a file directly from your computer with the fax/modem, you can scan in a page from a magazine, for example, and send it in a flash. And you can store incoming faxes on disk or print them immediately.

Perhaps the most welcome aspect of the high-end products is the way they let you control fax, scanning and printing from a single set of Windows programs, so you don't have to learn new software programs or hardware-based menus.



Okidata's Doc-It 3000 has a scanner.

If you're tired of working with your phone and keyboard in your lap, consider an all-in-one machine. You—and your dog—may be glad you did. ●

Russell Letson is a St. Cloud, Minn.-based computer journalist.

shopper's guide

Here's how to get more information on the all-in-one office products mentioned in this article.

Doc-It 3000

Okidata, (800) 654-3252, (609) 235-2600
\$2,499 (DOS, Windows)

Faxphone B160

Canon USA, (800) 828-4040, (516) 328-5000
\$1,595 (DOS, Windows)

OfficeJet

Hewlett-Packard, (800) 752-0900, (+15) 857-1501
\$959 (DOS, Windows)

Panasonic KX-SP100

Panasonic, (800) 742-5086, (201) 398-7000
\$799 (DOS, Windows)

PowerPrint

GDT Software, (800) 663-6222, (604) 291-9121
\$149 (Macintosh)

2001 Knowledge System

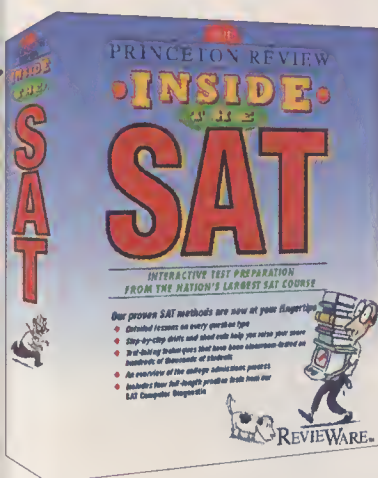
QMS, (800) 523-2696, (205) 633-4300
\$1,769 with fax/modem, \$1,649 without fax/modem (Windows)

Note: All prices are suggested retail.

THE

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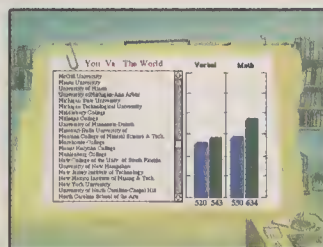
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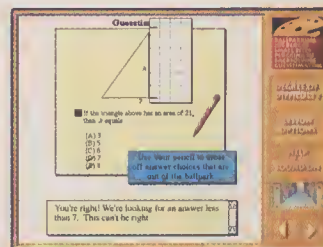
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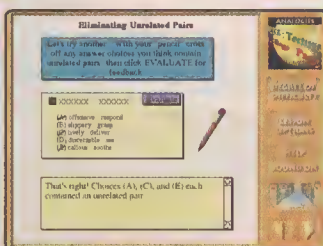
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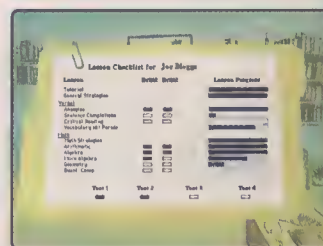
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The suggested retail price for the Diamond Multimedia Kit 5000 is \$599 and \$399 for the Diamond Multimedia Kit 1000.

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Please take a few moments to list the **three ads** that most **drew your attention** and briefly describe what it was about the ads that made you notice them.

To thank you for helping us, we're **giving away two double-speed CD-ROM Multimedia Kits** in a random drawing from cards returned by February 28th, 1995.

Best Regards,



Dan Schwartz
Publisher

HOMEPC

It really hits home

Please finish reading the issue before completing this form

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product benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company image	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lasting product-				
vendor assoc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes me want				
more information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Ad information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informs about				
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Company image	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lasting product-				
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Ad information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Lasting product-				
vendor assoc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes me want				
more information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you or your family:

- ☐ Currently use this product type
☐ Potentially use this product type

**Please enter my name in the drawing for
a double-speed CD-ROM Multimedia Kit.**

**Please enter my name in the
drawing for a double-speed
CD-ROM Multimedia Kit.**

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Advice that can save your family thousands in medical bills...

With innovative software, doctors now say "turn on your computer and call me in the morning."

By Charles Anton

Health care costs have doubled to more than \$850 billion a year in the United States. One of the best answers to reduce this drain on the average family pocket book is preventative medicine. What is computer technology doing to make this possible?

These doctors make house calls.

Now, with Dr. Schueler's Home Medical Advisor you can enjoy the power of diagnostic medicine instantly. You gain instant access to the latest information on symptom analysis, diseases, injuries, poisons, medical tests and medications just by pushing buttons in answer to prompts from this extremely thoughtful and unique program.

Send your computer to medical school.

In a very real sense you will be sending your computer to medical school. It's so simple. The computer actually interacts with you. It asks for personal medical history so that you can take a more active role in maintaining your own health. It would normally cost a fortune to obtain the advice of 40 different physicians. But with this program, which is now a best seller in its field, you'll get just that. Medical knowledge like this will no longer cost you and your family thousands in medical bills.

The "Advisor" leads you through.

The program was designed with the home user in mind. You can look up diseases, injuries, poisons, drugs, health and diet. From the 70-item symptom file, you pick the one that most closely describes what ails

you. If you choose 'fever' it will list a dozen possible causes, then ask you a series of questions, and give you some idea of what could be

wrong. It will then suggest a remedy or suggest you visit a physician specialist. The Home Medical Advisor also tells you about the side effects of more than 1,200 drugs and the treatment for ingestion of more than 500 common household substances.

Cut medical costs.

Advisor users help their doctors make a diagnosis faster, with less tests, by communicating more effectively. This saves patients time and money. Physicians agree with the Advisor. It will help you help yourself, with important tips on diets, staying healthy, self-care, fitness, and healthy life styles.

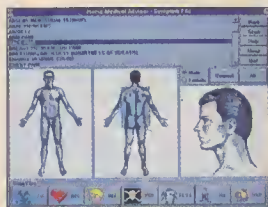
The critic's choice.

There are other programs that contain medical information. But the critics of such software complain that they are hard to use.

Not so with the Home Medical Advisor. *Longevity Magazine* called it "The best doc-in-the-box program around... it not only deluges you with medical information but presents it in a manner that no book can duplicate." *Business Week Magazine* writes "Home Medical Advisor helps you diagnose problems and decide whether a trip to the doctor is necessary..." *Byte Magazine* concludes "Once you've consulted HMA, you'll know what to expect when you seek treatment, and you'll be better able to choose specialists."

Home Medical Advisor

■ **Symptom File:** Analyze your problem using the question and answer format that generates over 600 color illustrations, making 450 different diagnoses.



■ **Disease File:** Access detailed information about the signs, symptoms, evaluation and treatment of over 450 diseases.

■ **Injury File:** Explore over 130 different injuries - everything from a gunshot wound to scuba injuries.



■ **Poison File:** Over 500 common household substances and products, and what you should do if ingestion occurs.

■ **Drug File:** Over 1200 prescription and nonprescription drug indications, side effects and drug interaction.

■ **Test File:** Over 125 of the most frequently performed medical tests. Find out how, when and why they are done, their risks and possible complications.

■ **Referral File:** A listing of the board certified specialists in your state could make choosing your doctor easy.



A wealth of knowledge.

The Home Medical Advisor was created by Dr. Stephen Schueler, emergency department director at Holme Regional Medical Center, with the added expertise of 40 board-certified physician specialists. The program includes a 74-page manual with medical glossary, first aid information and easy instructions.

Easy upgrade with new information.

Every eight to ten months a low cost upgrade will be made available. You can update your Home Medical Advisor with the latest medical information from diseases and nutrition to tips on staying healthy.

Direct from the doctor to you.

A sophisticated medical software program like this can retail for \$250 or more. But through this special promotional offer, this wealth of medical knowledge can be yours for only \$69 for the DOS version (\$79 for the Windows 3.1 version.) These prices are available for a limited time.

Risk-free money-back guarantee.

The Home Medical Advisor is backed-up by our "No Questions Asked" money-back guarantee. If you're not completely satisfied, simply return it within 30 days for a full refund.

The Home Medical Advisor is available in both 3.5 and 5.25 disk format. Please indicate your choice of DOS or the Windows version when ordering.

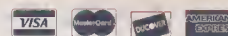
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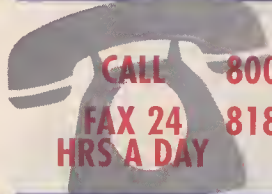


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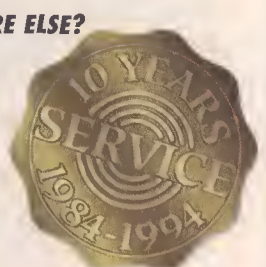
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on-line connections

EXPLORING THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY



Tracee Townsend calls it "a miracle by modem," a testament to the power of love on-line.

If this sounds a bit like the start of a soap opera, well, go ahead and call it "Ryan's Hope." It all began last spring in a little corner of America Online called the Romance Connection

Romance forums: Where to look for Mr. or Ms. Write

when a man named Ryan posted a note about his desire for companionship, marriage and, eventually, a family.

"It got one response. Mine!" says Tracee, a 27-year-old first-grade teacher from Mobile, Ala. "I had never answered anything like this before, but I'm sure glad I did. We had both given up on ever finding someone to share our lives, but he's the man I've been looking for all my life. It's all still a little unbelievable to me, but we are going to live happily ever after!"

Electronic personal ads are hot, especially on America Online and Prodigy, two of the biggest commercial on-line services. Global, instant and discreet, cyberspace love notes put a fun new spin on the dating game. The same modem connection that lets you post personal ads works just as well for electronic love letters and even a "virtual first date."

"Ryan and I communicated [by electronic mail] for three weeks or so, then chatted in a

private room," says Tracee, referring to electronic conference areas where couples can trade private messages in real time. "During our second chat, Ryan proposed. We continued to chat each evening for a week, and sent each other photos [by regular mail]. Then we began talking on the phone about meeting in person."

Within six weeks, Ryan Townsend, 31, closed his small software business in Carthage, Miss., packed all his belongings and drove four hours to Mobile to meet Tracee and her family face to face for the first time. They were married the very next morning in her parents' home.

"It was the ultimate blind date,"

Tracee quips. She knows many in her family were "still in shock" at the suddenness of her marriage to someone she had known for such a short time. However, Tracee vouches for the intimacy of intense on-line communication

by saying that when she and Ryan finally met face to face, "I already knew him and loved him. I just hadn't held his hand yet."



Obviously, not all on-line encounters lead to a whirlwind courtship and matrimony. But many progress through the same stages, from e-mail to on-line chats to phone calls and, finally, a face-to-face meeting. And it all begins with personal ads.

America Online's Romance Connection is part of the basic AOL service. You can reach the feature by using the keyword Romance. (Click on AOL's Go To pull-down menu, select "Keyword" and type Romance in the window that pops up on screen.) The next window offers options including "Make a

by charles bowen

Match" by age group (Teens, 20s, Over 30, Over 40, Single Again or All Ages) or by geographic region.

The Romance Connection is divided into electronic file folders called "topics." Each contains ads targeted at specific groups. Wanted: Southwest Male, for instance, has notes from people hoping to meet men from Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and neighboring states. More general topics include Pen-Pals, Sports and Games.

When you find an ad from a kindred spirit, you can reply by using AOL's regular electronic mail. The From: section of each note lists the sender's screen name (such as

"Steve1234," "CBowen" or "Love-Bug"). To write to that person, select Mail from AOL's menu bar, choose the "Compose Mail" option, enter the screen name in the To: box, tap out your thoughts and click on the Send icon.

Those who prefer to take the lead in love can post their own ads on the Romance Connection. To do this, select either the Make Your Match: Find by Age Group or the Make Your Match: Find by Region category and choose the topic in which you want your ad to appear. Next, click on the Post Message icon and, when prompted, write and

post your personal ad.

Remember, though, you may be single, but you won't be alone. Typically there are 30,000 to 35,000 messages posted on the Romance Connection, though some are literally too good to be true. Some people post phony personal ads as a



Someone on-line's your *type*; here's how to *catch his or her eye*



Unlucky in love? Well, your luck can change on-line with just a few carefully chosen words.

In electronic romance, you are what you write. "Here, appearance is the last thing you see," says Mike Deutsch, who runs America Online's Romance Connection. His service has brought together thousands of people—some for a date or two, others for a more lasting relationship.

"There's no indication of looks, mannerisms or tastes in fashion here," adds Deutsch. "You move right past the superficial and into the heart, mind and soul. Imagine spending an evening just talking with someone—no worries about, 'Is my hair right?' 'What should I wear?' or 'Which fork do I use?' Dating someone on-line, communicating one-on-one for hours at a time, you get to

know them better and more quickly than you ever would elsewhere."

Here are Deutsch's tips for writing an on-line personal ad or a response that jumps off the computer screen straight into someone's heart:

- **Be yourself.** Let your personality shine through.
- **Be creative.** Have fun with whatever you write. Sprinkle your message with well-turned phrases, light humor, literary quotes, even poetry.
- **Be honest.** Don't make exaggerated claims about yourself or promises you can't keep.
- **Be concise.** A couple of paragraphs is about right. Anything longer might put the reader off. At the same time, don't write something too short to make an impression.
- **Know what kind of person you're looking for.** And mention the qualities

that someone else might find interesting about you.

- **Be polite.** You don't want would-be partners to think that you're a boor.
- **Respond to messages promptly.** Remember, you aren't the only one who'll notice a great ad.
- **Guard your privacy.** Don't post your address or phone number in public forums—there's plenty of time to exchange that information when you begin corresponding in private messages.
- **Create and maintain an accurate personal profile.** This can be posted in the on-line service's member directory or shared on request when you exchange private e-mail.
- **Never let 'em see you sweat.** Don't say you're lonely, desperate or—please!—sleepless. These words do not convey confidence, playfulness or character. —C.B.

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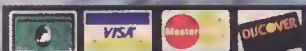
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prauk, and a smattering of scam artists lurk in cyberspace, telling tales of woe in an effort to part you from your money.

Prodigy gets personal

A more elaborate alternative to AOL's no-frills Romance Connection, Prodigy's Online Personals offers voice mail and an option to see ads in certain telephone area codes. There's an extra fee of six cents per minute (\$3.60 an hour) to use the service.

You can access Online Personals by clicking on Prodigy's Jump menu. Select the Jump To option and enter Personals as the destination. An introductory screen provides options to place, extend and/or browse the ads.

Select the Browse Ads option and the system asks you to choose a category: Men Seeking Women, Women Seeking Men, Men Seeking

the box number. If you like what you hear, you can leave a message on the voice-mail system. The call is billed at \$2 a minute by your long-distance phone company.

It costs \$2 to place an on-line ad with Prodigy for 30 days. You can write up to two screens—about 80 words—plus a title ("Lost My Way in L.A.," "Authentic Goddess" and "A Rare Gem—Find Me" are some of the more creative headlines I spotted).

After you place your ad, you receive an electronic letter containing the ad's box number, along with a six-digit security code and a toll-free number to record a voice greeting. The \$2 on-line ad fee is refunded if you leave a voice-mail message, too.

A Prodigy official says Online Personals' policy does not allow anyone to leave phone numbers, street addresses or last names in on-line or voice messages, and that the service accepts ads only from people 18 years of age or older "who are looking for a monogamous relationship." (Of course, Prodigy must take that information on faith.)

There are other places to look for love on-line,

though some may be a bit risqué for certain tastes. For instance, many users find the Internet's alt.personals newsgroup (discussion group) too sexually explicit. Since most information services provide access to the Internet, parents may want to monitor which newsgroups are viewed by younger family members.

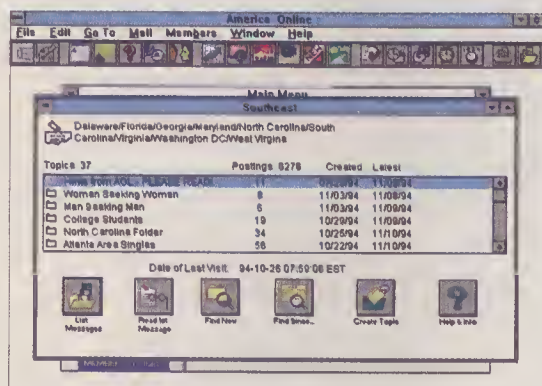
On the other hand, CompuServe has a policy that prohibits personal ads in its Classifieds area and posts an on-line message to that effect. But that doesn't mean romance is dead on the nation's oldest (and largest)

information service. CompuServe's hundreds of discussion forums offer a wealth of opportunities to meet a mate.

In fact, if you're looking for romance on-line, don't rely solely on personal ads—check out other on-line features such as bulletin boards, forums, e-mail and real-time conferencing. Some public message boards, like Prodigy's Singles Bulletin Board (Jump: Dating), operate much like personal ads. The boards' lack of privacy, however, may inhibit some people.

And don't limit yourself to "singles" bulletin boards, either. All subject-specific boards on America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy and other on-line services attract people of like interests—from gardening to golf, computers to camping—making them great places to make friends and find someone special.

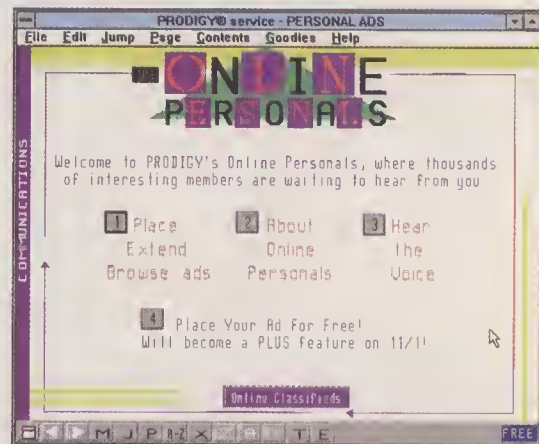
Even in a high-tech world, romance doesn't have to be complicated. Just follow your heart to the places you're already interested in visiting, and who knows? Maybe you won't have to find love. Maybe it will find you. •



Free love: AOL's Romance Connection has no fee.

Men or Women Seeking Women. The system then produces a list of ad headlines, grouped by area code. You can start at the top of the list with area code 201, which covers northern New Jersey, or enter a different area code to jump to that portion of the list. (You'll need to know the area code of the region you want to see; there's no directory.) Click on any headline to view its contents. A Reply option at the bottom of each ad lets you send a quick, private written response.

Ads on Prodigy also include a four-digit box number you can use to hear the advertiser's voice before replying. To do this, call a 900 number printed at the bottom of the Prodigy screen from a Touch-Tone phone and punch in

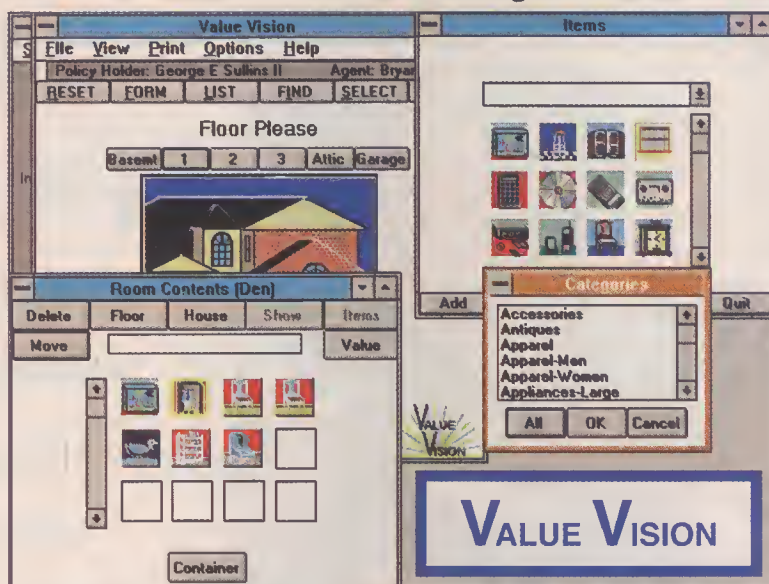


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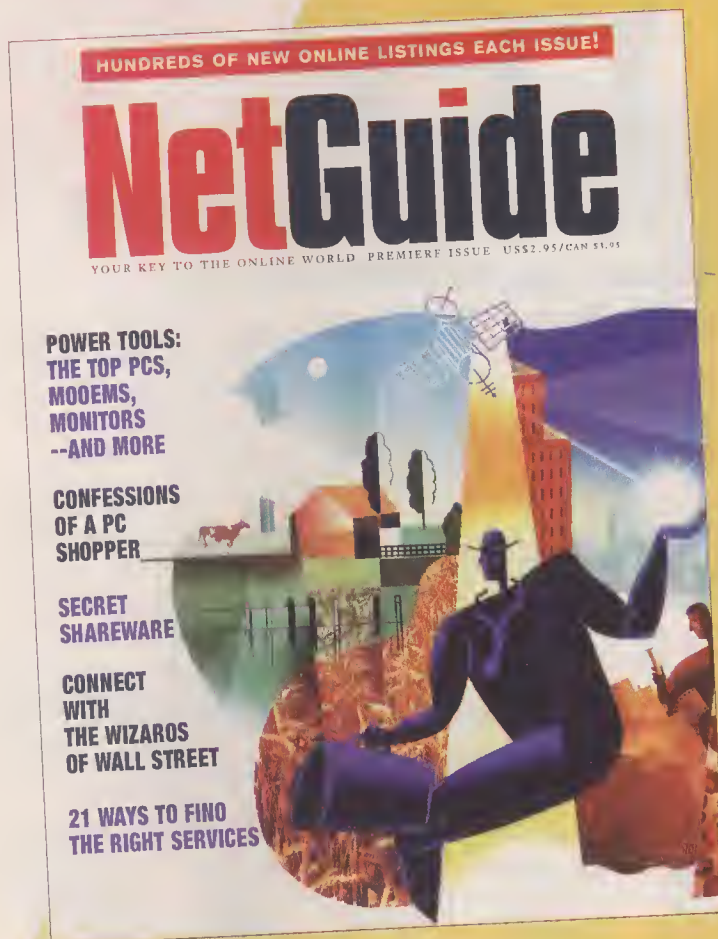


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WHAT'S NEW ON THE SHELF

Troubleshooting Your PC

by Jim Aspinwall, Rory Burke
and Mike Todd
MIS: Press, 1994
\$32.95

When you're calling long-distance for technical support, the two words you least want to hear are "Please hold." The real-world translation? "This is going to take some time and money." The words in *Troubleshooting Your PC* are much more

How to fix your PC without going broke

comforting. The comprehensive 750-page reference guide, complete with a supplementary disk that includes DiagSoft's QAPlus diagnostic software, can help even the most fumble-fingered home PC owner avoid some costly repairs.

The authors deftly explain how your PC works in a way that will delight technophiles without scaring off rookies. The book clarifies virtually every fine detail of your PC's hardware, operating systems (DOS, Windows and a bit of OS/2) and software in language that's easy to understand. Whether you need to know how IRQ (Interrupt Request)

conflicts can cause your components to malfunction or you're just curious about what happens when your computer boots up, you can find the answers here.

To help novices diagnose what ails their PCs, a Problem Index at the end of each chapter lists common problems and possible solutions. The index covers 171 categories ranging from odd startup messages such as "Error Messages 01x or 02x" to "Really Weird Things That Can Happen" (for instance, rodents leaving deposits on your PC's motherboard). Black-and-white line drawings help identify a PC's internal components.

And if the book can't solve your PC problem, you can try QAPlus,

which contains a file called *techsprt.txt* with telephone numbers for many vendors' technical support lines. A handy five-page trouble report form in the book helps you gather important details for the support gurus. If you're determined to do it yourself, one chapter provides both analyses and recommendations for diagnostic and utility programs such as Norton Disk Doctor or Gibson Research's SpinRite.

Troubleshooting Your PC covers all systems from the original IBM XT 8088 to the latest Pentium barn burner. Unfortunately, a few outdated references slipped into the book. For example,

users who want to add memory but have no space left to add single in-line memory modules (SIMMs) are advised to install a memory board—even though performance can suffer when anyone

with a 386-, 486- or Pentium-based PC uses these largely obsolete add-ons.

By and large, however, *Troubleshooting Your PC*'s advice is up-to-date and accurate. Many software problems are easily solved once you identify them, and hardware components can be replaced expertly by the average user with a little guidance—and that's why *Troubleshooting Your PC* can be such a big help.

The button hook

The Pushbutton Guide To Microsoft Office

by Peter G. Aitken
Sybex, 1994
\$19.99

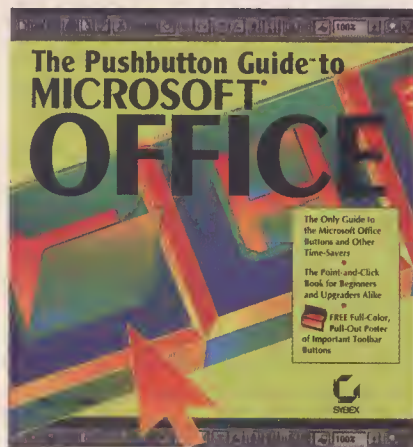
Do you sometimes feel you need a key to unlock the secrets of Microsoft's mammoth word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and electronic-mail suite? Do the mushrooming features in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Mail have you dazed and confused? *The Pushbutton Guide to Microsoft Office* ushers you around this powerful but often daunting group of programs by showing you how to master its button-based toolbars. The book is especially valuable for owners of the Microsoft Office CD-ROM, which comes with only on-screen documentation.

Most new users track down Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Mail functions through each program's menus and dialogue boxes; in time, they may memorize a few keyboard shortcuts. Many users ignore the buttons on the toolbars because their cryptic icons often provide only limited clues to their purpose. But, as the title of this book suggests, author Peter G. Aitken uses the toolbars as the focus for maneuvering around each program.

Throughout the book's 430 pages, Aitken provides clear descrip-



by david d. busch



tious of what each button on the toolbars does and shows how using the toolbars can boost productivity. It's a formidable task: Besides the four core programs, there's Office Manager, which has a toolbar that lets you switch from one program to the next. Aitken explains how to customize Office Manager's toolbar by making the buttons bigger, and even how to design your own buttons to launch other programs.

The book devotes separate sections to each part of Office. Aitken crams virtually all the information anyone needs to know about each program into 75- to 150-page sections. And when menu commands and keyboard shortcuts are faster or easier than the push buttons, he doesn't shy away from saying so.

Still, the buttons are the reason this book exists. Word alone has eight toolbars plus 35 optional, customizable button bars. But once you've learned to use the most important buttons, even the most complex functions are only a single click away.

Best of all, the main Office applications share many buttons (as does Microsoft Access, a database this book doesn't cover, which is available separately or in Office's Professional version), so learning one program helps you understand the others. Once you learn to use the buttons to format text in a Word document, for example, it should be easy to select number formats in Excel. PowerPoint users will likewise find shortcuts for working with slides, changing views and importing text from Word or Excel files.

Pushbutton Guide includes its

own Office-like tools to make using the book easier. A "Toolbar Buttons at a Glance" section features large illustrations of important buttons and cross-referenced descriptions of how they work. The inside front and back covers have "road maps" showing the menus, status bars and default toolbars of each application. A full-color 30-by-22-inch poster of the buttons and their descriptions is included for quick reference.

On the downside, *Pushbutton Guide* contains only scant coverage of Microsoft Mail; then again, the program has only eight buttons. Even without that coverage, the book is a concise source of vital information that will give any Office user the key to a quicker start.

To the Macs

The System 7.5 Book

by Craig Danuloff
Ventana Press, 1994
\$24.95

The first edition of this reference work, *The System 7 Book*, has been a fixture on my bookshelf for three years, so I eagerly awaited *The System 7.5 Book* to help with my upgrade to the latest version of Apple's Macintosh operating system. And I was not disappointed: Craig Danuloff's revamp of his classic proved just as helpful as the original was.

Danuloff has expanded the book to 678 pages—300 more than the first edition—and added gobs of technical data while retaining the conversational tone that helped make *The System 7 Book* one of Ventana's best sellers. New chapters cover subjects such as the Power Macintosh (Apple's latest model, which uses the PowerPC chip), QuickDraw GX (the language that essentially creates all the shapes

you see on your Mac screen). AppleScript (the Mac programming language) and Apple's Open Collaboration Environment (OCE, a tool that lets several people work on the same document). New or revamped sections explore the wealth of utility programs that speed many routine tasks, and readers interested in the more advanced possibilities for working with groups of linked computers will enjoy the explanations of topics such as electronic mail. Icons in the book's margins highlight information that is specific to System 7.5.

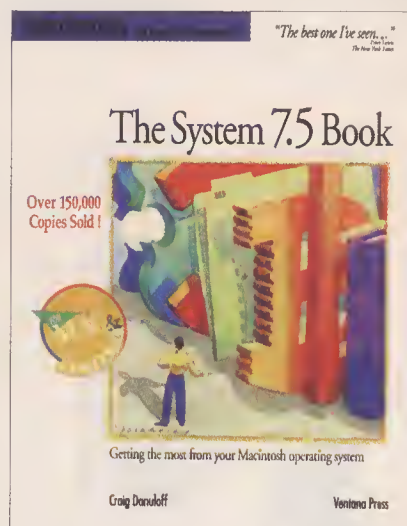
The first thing most System 7.5 users will tackle is installation and updating, and Danuloff's 22-page chapter on upgrade procedures and pitfalls can save readers a lot of grief. For example, he recommends manually removing some earlier software files because Apple's Installer does a poor job. He also reminds users to update hard-disk drivers to avoid problems later.

The section helped me work through some of my own installation problems: I had suffered for not heeding Danuloff's advice to install System 7.5 on a "clean" hard disk, but with the book's help I quickly returned the smile to my Mac's startup icon.

Granted, there is more detail in *The System 7.5 Book* than a beginner wants or needs, but it's an unbeatable reference. More experienced users will appreciate the in-

side information, and newcomers will be glad it's around when it comes time to troubleshoot, upgrade or finally work up the nerve to experiment with one of those tempting new features. ●

David D. Busch has written 45 books about Macs and PCs, including *Outrageous PC F/X and Macintosh F/X* (MIS: Press).

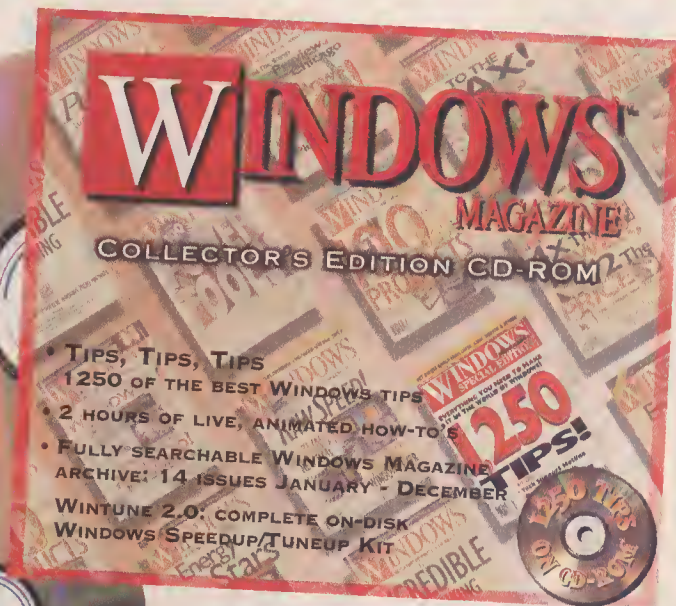


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Best Personalized Books	216
D&K Enterprises, Inc.	217
Hefty Publishing Co., Inc.	216
National Claims Services	217
National Computerized Business Services Inc.	218
PCDI	217
Precision Data	216
Smart Luck Software.....	217

CD ROM/Multimedia

Computer Gallery	223
Consolidated CD ROM.....	221
Emerald Software, Inc.	222
Mr. CD-ROM.....	223
NeoSoft Corp.	220

Computer Checks

Designer Checks	215
-----------------------	-----

Cooking

Ruth's Recipes	214
----------------------	-----

Education

Grantham College	218
Institute of Technical Studies	218
Integrated Education	218

Kids Korner

Carmacon	231
Discovery Entertainment Software	230
Greatime Software.....	231
Lawrence Productions.....	231
School-Age Software	230
Softsparks	229
The Edutainment Company	229

Language

TransLanguage, Inc.	219
--------------------------	-----

Medical Reference

Pixel Perfect.....	219
--------------------	-----

Music

Edirol	229
The Blue Ribbon Soundworks, Ltd.	228
Twelve Tone	229

Personal Success

Humanagement	227
--------------------	-----

Problem Resolution

CyberMedia	223
------------------	-----

Screen Savers

Fishpot Images.....	221
---------------------	-----

Sewing

Bartley Software, Inc.	214
QuiltSOFT	214

Shareware

The Source	229
------------------	-----

VIDEOS

Instructional

Users Choice	232
--------------------	-----

ON-LINE

BBS

Global Gallery	216
----------------------	-----

SERVICES

Insurance

SAFWARE, The Insurance Agency, Inc.	214
--	-----

ACCESSORIES

Ink

Cronite	221
---------------	-----

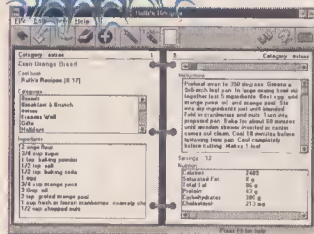
Touch Screen

KEYTEC, Inc.	221
-------------------	-----

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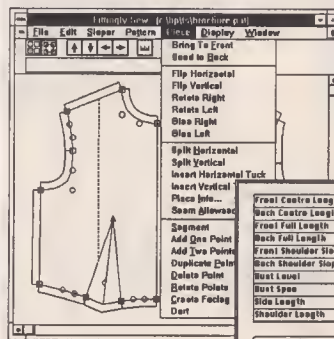
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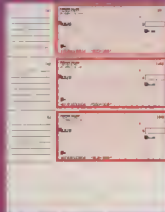
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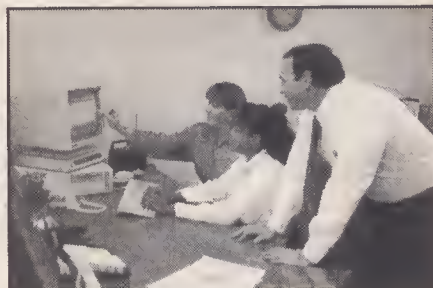
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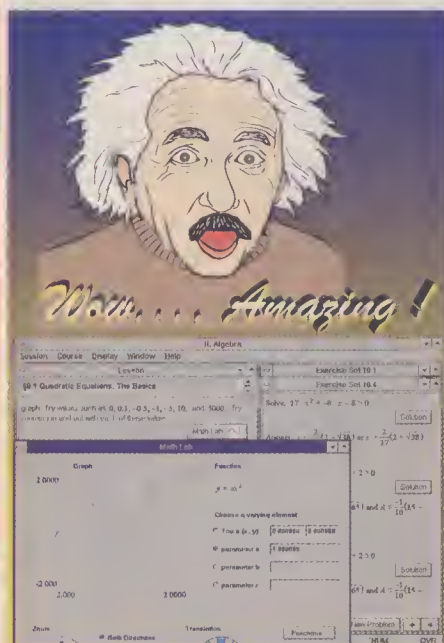
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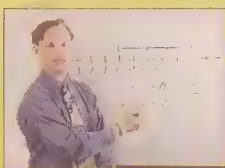


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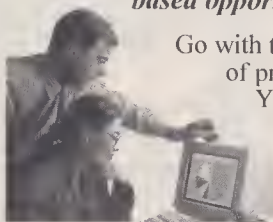
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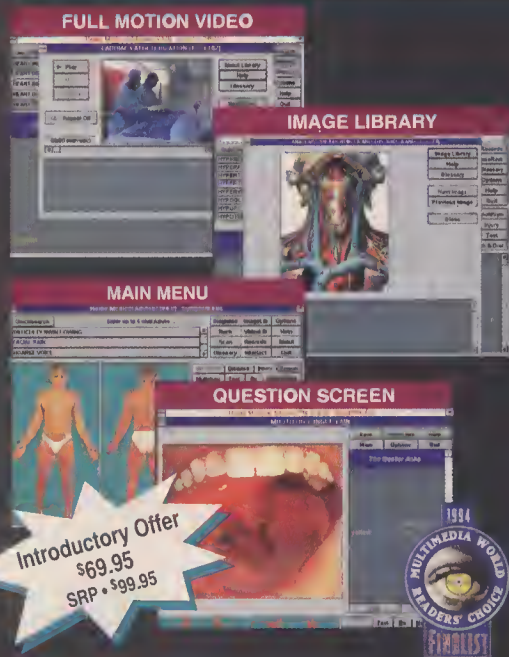
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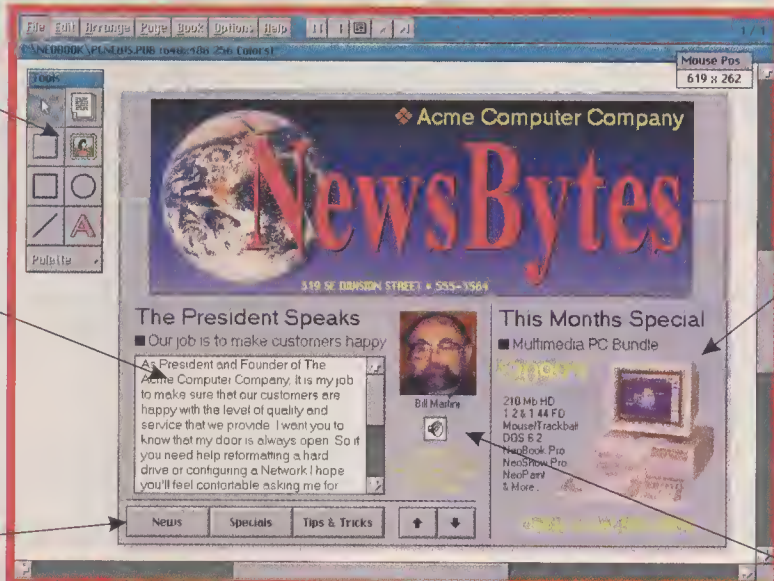
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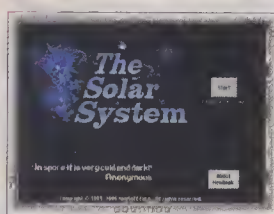
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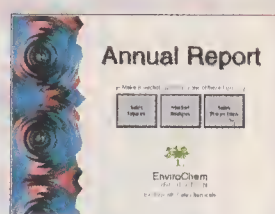
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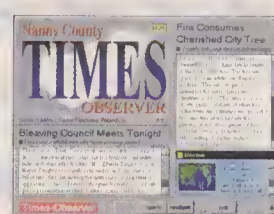
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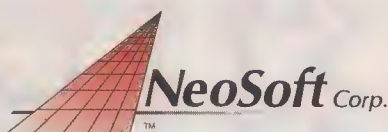
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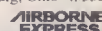
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advertiser	page	advertiser	page	advertiser	page
A.N. Media	203	Epson America	12-13	NEC Technologies	18-19
Acecad	107	Fishpot Images	221	NeoSoft Corp.	220
Acer America Corp.	81-84	Fractal Design	73	NetManage	177
America Online	179-180	Fusion Software	205	Nokia Display Products Inc.	
American Education Publishing		Gateway 2000	60-63	26-27
.....	190	Gold Disk	75	NRI Schools	145-147
American Power Conversion		Global Gallery	216	NU Reality	14
.....	40-43	Grantham College	218	Okidata	65
Apple Computer	31, 44-45	Greatime Software	231	PCDI	217
AT&T Global Information ..	C5-C7	Gryphon Software Corp.	155	Pixel Perfect	219
Automap Inc.	156	GTE Interactive	118-119	Precision Data	216
Bartley Software Inc.	214	HarperCollins Interactive	129	Princeton Review	195
Best Personalized Books		Health Help Corp.	190	Prodigy	109-110
.....	216	Hefty Publishing Co. Inc.	216	QuiltSOFT	214
Big Top Productions	95	Hewlett-Packard	24-25	Rand McNally	105
Bookmaker Corp.	141	Humanagement	227	Ruth's Recipes	214
Canon Computer Systems	2-3	IBM Direct	54-55	SAFEWARE, The Insurance	
Carmacon	231	ImagiNation Network	127-128	Agency Inc.	214
Claris	112	Institute of Technical Studies	218	School-Age Software	230
Class Act Multimedia	171	Integrated Education	218	Select Comfort Corp.	16
Columbia House	37	Internews	20	Serif Inc.	152
Compton's NewMedia	21	Interplay Productions	51-53	Shapeware Visio	56-57
Compuclassic	200	Intuit South	123	Sigma Designs	143
Computer Associates	23, 34	IVI Publishing	66, 137, 167	Smart Luck Software	217
Computer Express	96-97	KEYTEC Inc.	221	Softsparks	229
Computer Gallery	223	Kidsoft Inc.	165	Software Publishers Association	
Comtrad Industries	199	Lawrence Productions	231	80, 85, 232
ConnectSoft	160	Living Books	193	Stac	28
Consolidated CD ROM	221	Logitech	11	Star Press	182
Corel Systems Corp.	C2-1	LucasArts	151	Sunstar Publishing	190
Creative Labs	8, 32-33	Mr. CD-ROM	223	The Blue Ribbon Soundworks	
Cronite	221	Mag Innovision	6-7	Ltd.	228
CyberMedia	223	Maxis	49	The Discovery Channel	159
D & K Enterprises Inc.	217	MECC	130	The Edutainment Company	229
Datastorm Technologies	125	Medio	186	The Source	229
Davidson & Associates Inc. ..	86	Micrografx	17	TransLanguage Inc.	219
Delorme Mapping	139	Micron Computer	78-79	Twelve Tone Systems	229
Designer Checks	215	Microsoft	67	USA Flex	68-69
Digital Directory	148	Midisoft	70	User's Choice, Inc.	232
Discovery Entertainment		Mindscape	93	Visual Software	39
Software	230	Morgan Interactive	C8	Wolfram Research	168
Edirol Corp.	229	National Claims Service	217	XSoft	175
Edmark	4-5	National Computerized Business		Yamaha	77
Emerald Software Inc.	222	Services Inc.	218	Zygon	172

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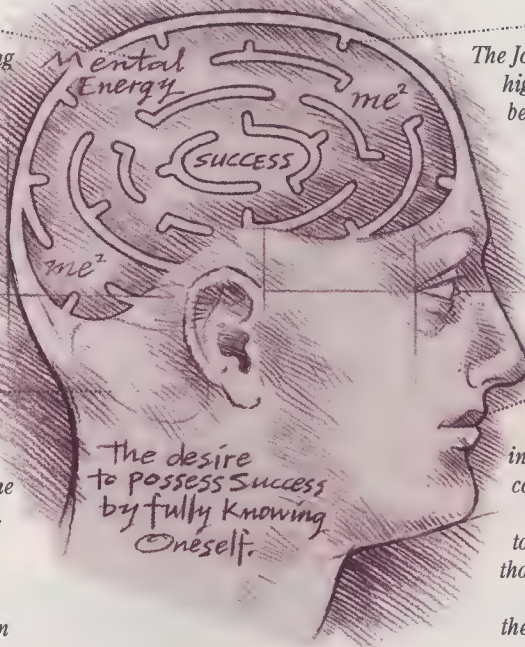
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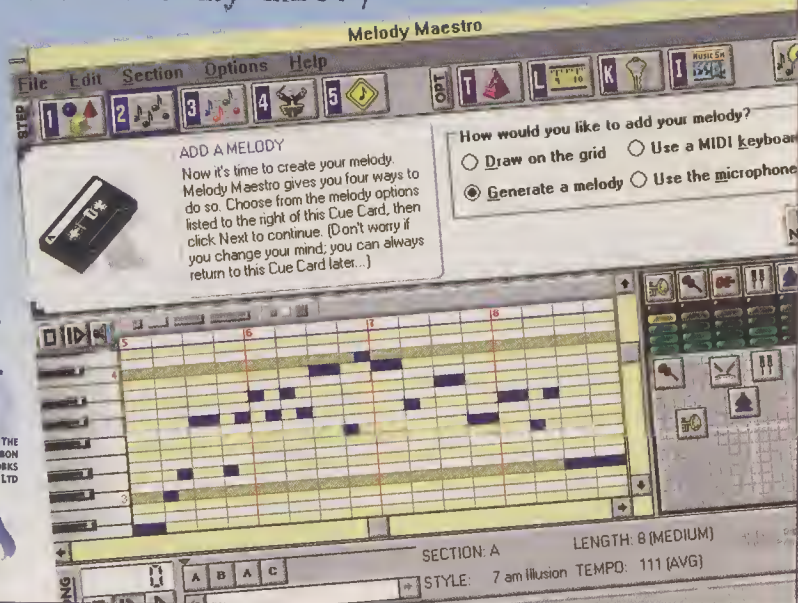
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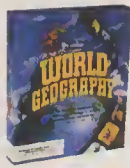
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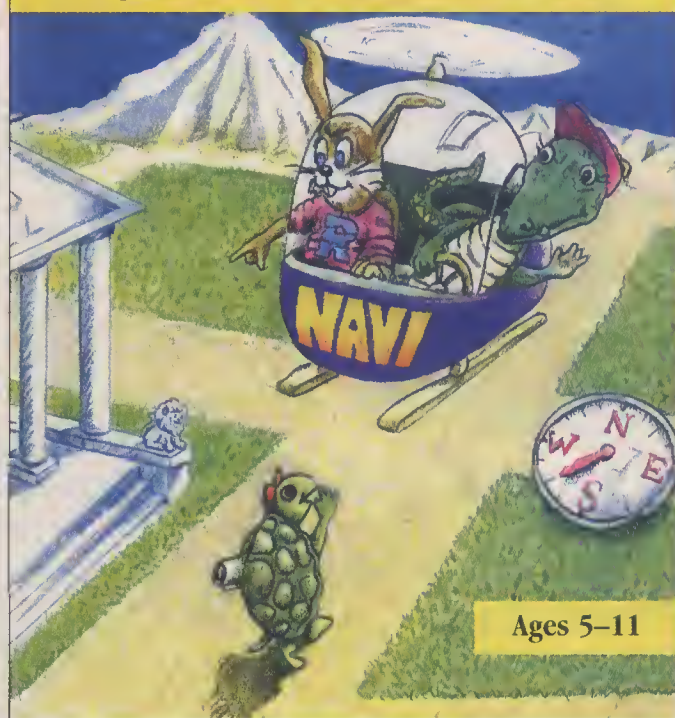
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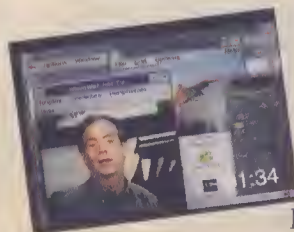
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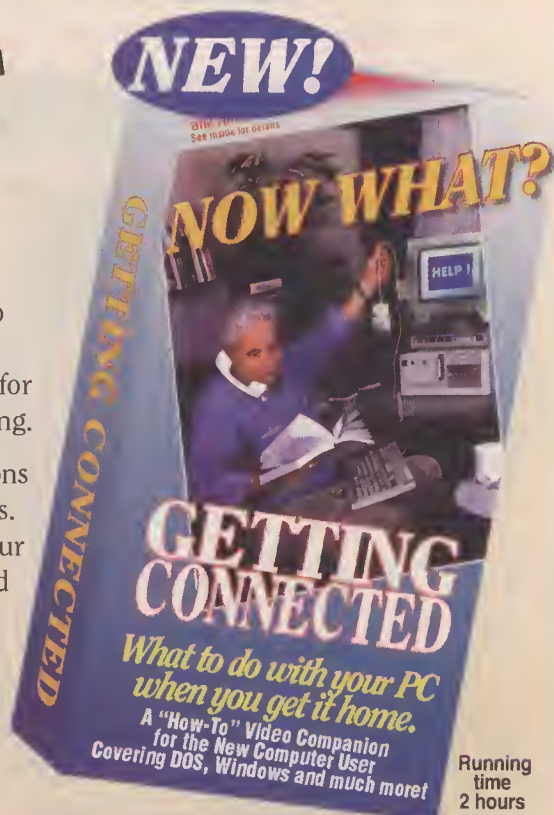
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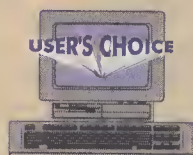
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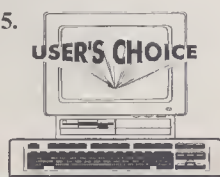
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REFLECTIONS ON HOME AND TECHNOLOGY



As I watch my 7-year-old son, Noah, and my 4-year-old daughter, Audrey, use our home computer to play musical instruments from distant lands, plumb the depths of oceans on the

For families, PC means Parental Commitment

far side of the planet or send electronic mail to their grandfather, I know the "home computer revolution" is finally real. What with plummeting hardware costs and the rising tide of family-oriented software, the multimedia computer is rapidly becoming a household appliance.

But there's more to family computing than affordable hardware and software. As moms and dads in the multimedia age, our involvement and judgment is crucial in every aspect of our kids' computing.

Start with the software. A parent's presence should almost be listed on the box as a "minimum requirement" for any program sold for children. That doesn't mean you need to sit with young kids every minute they're at the computer. But be on hand the first time or two they run a program, and praise them for using the computer actively and productively. If your kids are a little older, encourage them to show *you* around their favorite programs. Your enthusiasm will make them feel good about their emerging prowess.

Long before they lead you on

by

Steve

Bennett

a guided tour of the program's finer points, though, you should know something about what's on screen. Magazine reviews are a great place to learn about new software, and the Software Publishers Association rating system that parents will begin seeing on boxes this spring will provide further guidance. But ultimately, you must test-drive programs before deciding what's appropriate for your children.

Take games, for example. Look to see how players are rewarded—do kids score points for using creativity or for becoming a more savage killer? How are the "bad guys" portrayed—do the games perpetuate stereotypes? In other words, do the games support or contradict the basic values about life you're trying to teach?

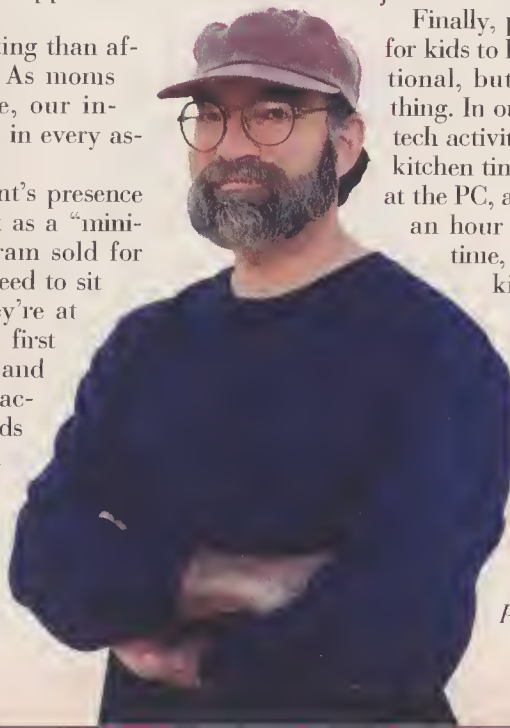
A parent's responsibility may be even more important for kids using on-line services. We've all read about predators lurking on electronic bulletin boards and the easy access kids have to sexually explicit materi-

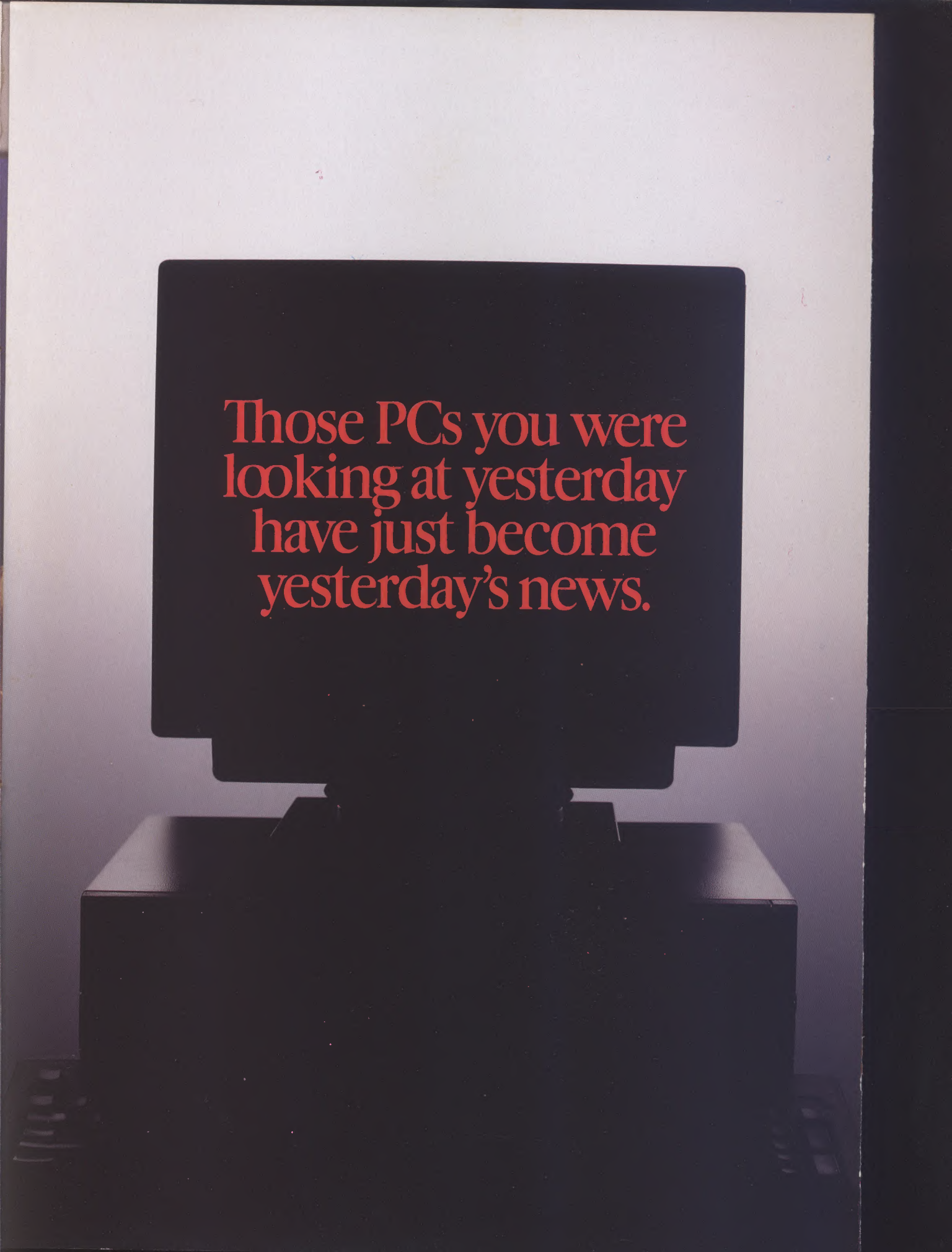
al on the Internet. The problems may be overstated, but the fact is that only a parent can look out for kids' interests in cyberspace. So learn to do what they're doing: Send and receive e-mail, download text and graphics files, and join on-line discussion groups. Peruse Internet directories, and visit the electronic places your child roams. Post rules about not giving out phone numbers and addresses. And be assertive about your child's computing—there's just too much at stake.

Finally, parents have to know when it's time for kids to log out. Computing is fun and educational, but kids can get too much of a good thing. In our house, we regulate our kids' high-tech activities with a simple low-tech device—a kitchen timer. Noah and Audrey get equal time at the PC, and we make sure total screen time—an hour per session—doesn't replace playtime, reading or simple "downtime." Our

kids don't always like these rules, but we believe they'll learn an important lesson about self-regulation and that the computer is just one of the many interests they can pursue. In the long run, I'm sure the lesson will serve them well. •

Steve Bennett is co-author of The Official Kid Pix Activity Book, Kick the TV Habit and numerous parenting books.



A vintage computer setup featuring a CRT monitor on a swivel stand and a large horizontal system unit below it. The monitor screen is black with red text. The system unit has two keyboard slots visible on the front. The background is a light, textured wall.

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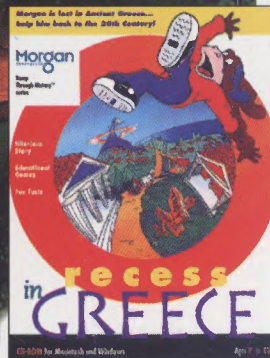
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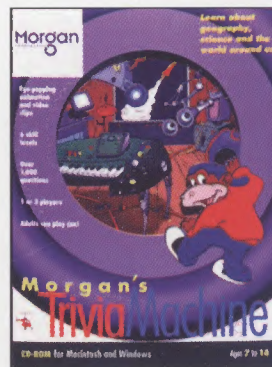
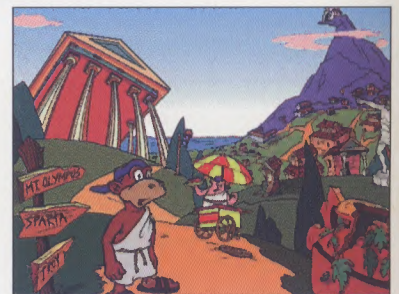
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